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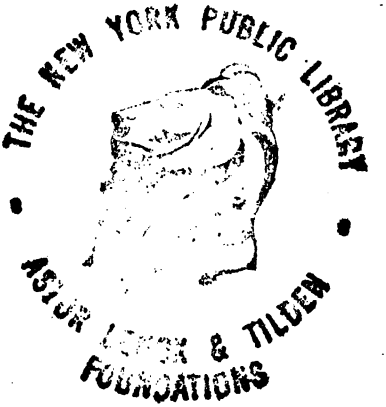
BY

J. T. NASH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THE BENGAL YEOMANRY CAVALRY (VOLUNTEERS) IN THE INDIAN MUTINY CAMPAIGN, 1857-58.

VOLUNTEERING IN INDIA;

OR

AN AUTHENTIC NARRATIVE OF THE MILITARY SERVICES

OF THE

Bengal Yeomanry Cavalry

DURING THE INDIAN MUTINY, AND SEPOY WAR.

BY

JOHN TULLOCH NASH, F.S.A.

LONDON:
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LIVERPOOL: 45 TO 51, SOUTH CASTLE STREET.
1893.

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In Memoriam.

DEDICATED TO THE BELOVED MEMORY

OF

GENERAL JOSEPH NASH, C.B.,

A MAN ESTEEMED BY ALL WITH WHOM

HE CAME IN CONTACT, AND WHO PASSED A LIFE-LONG

MILITARY CAREER IN SERVING HIS COUNTRY

WITH RARE DISTINCTION AND HONOUR,

BY

HIS ELDEST SON, THE AUTHOR,

LATE OF THE

BENGAL YEOMANRY CAVALRY.

PREFACE.

In the following narrative an attempt has been made to relate the military services of the Bengal Yeomanry Cavalry during the Indian Mutiny, and Sepoy War; and as truth lies in a small compass, so this little volume contains no fiction, nor will any conjectural narration be found in its compressed chapters of unembellished facts.

Parenthetically, it may be recorded in this place that, as the Bengal Yeomanry Cavalry was the parent, or pioneer Corps, of the great Patriotic Force now established and consolidated in England, it is entitled to claim the proud distinction of having undeniably originated the modern Volunteer movement throughout the British Empire, and this narrative will tend to show that the Corps was worthy of that proud position.

Although more than thirty years have elapsed since the "transitory regiment" passed away with the shifting tide of events, the subjoined narrative is the legitimate offspring of my manuscript journal, kept with diligence and care at the time when the various movements, scenes, and actions it describes occurred.

Nevertheless, the mere fact of my having kept this

journal as a sealed book up to the present day, conclusively proves that I never intended to publish its contents, nor did I anticipate ever being asked by the gallant survivors (there are, alas! few now left) of my late fellow-volunteers to allow it to be published. They, however, see that a Volunteer Age has dawned upon the world since the eventful year 1857; and lest in the gigantic strides of the general movement the eminent services they rendered to their country in the darkest days of the Mutiny fade into oblivion, and be lost to them altogether, they naturally seek a descriptive record—an authoritative biography, as it were—to perpetuate the military operations in which they were engaged. I have accordingly traced an unassuming sketch of those familiar operations; and my readers must never lose sight of the fact that the Government Gazetted records—which are quoted in this plain, unvarnished narrative—substantiate, in every detail, the veracity of every paragraph I have written. And as regards all that concerns the rough composition of my pages, I have to ask some forbearance, for they but reflect, as in a glass, the contents of a journal penned not merely in the days of my youth, but also amid the interminable stir of a Mutiny never likely to be forgotten by those who bore the first shock of it, and passed through its fearful horrors.

LONDON, 1893.

VOLUNTEERING IN INDIA.

CHAPTER I.

1857 are figures indelibly dyed in blood, and their sanguinary impression stamps one of the most cruel, and sorrowful pages in the history of the world.

In that disastrous year of the Indian Mutiny—which even to the present day continues to furnish authentic material for the revelation of almost unknown episodes appertaining to that memorable period—the following abstract of Notification No. 931, dated July 23rd, 1857, was published by the Government of India :—

"The Governor-General in Council has reason to know that there are in Calcutta, Bengal, and the North-West Provinces many Englishmen whose peaceable avocations have been interrupted by the disturbed state of the country, and who, although in no way connected with the Government, are willing and eager to give an active support to its authority at the present time by sharing service in the Field with the troops of the Queen, and of the East India Company.

"The Governor-General in Council has thorough confidence in the loyalty, courage, and enterprising zeal of the community

to which he refers, and he is satisfied that service rendered in the spirit in which they are ready to give it will be most valuable to the State.

"With the view of availing himself of such service in the most effectual manner, his Lordship in Council directs that a Volunteer Corps of cavalry be formed, to be called the Bengal Yeomanry Cavalry, and to be equipped and prepared for duty in the disturbed districts," etc., etc.

At this critical time of national gloom, when there was mourning throughout the length and breadth of England, and Upper India was saturated with the innocent blood of our hapless fellow-countrymen, Volunteers—amid great demonstrations of enthusiasm—cheerfully responded to the appeal contained in the above-quoted notification, and within a week of its publication a cavalry regiment—composed not of "European adventurers and Eurasians," as was at first surmised, but of young military officers recently arrived from England, or those left idle by the mutiny of their regiments, of clerks in the Government and mercantile offices, of midshipmen belonging to the Peninsular and Oriental and other companies' ships, of indigo planters, of some unemployed Europeans and Eurasians, of young men related to the best families in the country; and most of these were excellent riders, good shots, and keen sportsmen—was actually formed, mounted, equipped, and ready for service in the field.

Accordingly, on an appointed day, at an early hour the Corps rode forth, and drew up on the Calcutta esplanade for inspection by the Governor-General.

But as the morning had not yet sufficiently brightened for the "review," I took advantage of the idle moments at my disposal to note on the margin of my shirt-cuff the uniform, or rather "turn-out," of the Volunteers.

They wore brown corduroy breeches, over which were drawn jack-boots reaching above the knees; loose blue flannel blouses (called "jumpers" by the diggers in Australia); and grey felt helmets enveloped in huge white turbans completed a rough-and-ready uniform, in which they certainly looked a dashing and dare-devil set of fellows. A heavy sabre, light carbine, and formidable revolvers were their arms.

The horses, though untrained, were young, powerful, and splendid animals for the hard and unceasing work they were destined to encounter. And their trappings were for service, and not for show.

The Governor-General (Lord Canning), having inspected and complimented the Volunteers, bade them a kind farewell—a sincere *au revoir*. And presently the Corps, numbering two hundred and fifty-eight sabres, under the leadership of Colonel Richardson, C.B., left Calcutta for Upper India.

Two hundred and fifty-eight Volunteers seem a paltry number to have rallied round the Government in so momentous a crisis as that which called them to arms on its behalf; but it must be borne in mind that in those awful days there were but a mere handful of available Englishmen in Bengal, and so far as their numbers were concerned, it was an acknowledged surprise that so many were found to leap forward in

aid of the State. Besides, during the Mutiny, it was not so much the force of numbers as the dreaded calm white face, with the avenging sword in hand, that made its presence terrible whenever and wherever it appeared before the mutineers. Moreover, the reader must not forget that it was impossible to overvalue the worth of an Englishman in those critical times. His very shadow was a tower of strength. And animated by a thorough sense of patriotism, and relying upon our own personal efforts, with unbounded confidence in each other, we were worth our number ten times told.

CHAPTER II.

From Calcutta the Corps, having been ferried across the river Hūghly to Howrāh, was conveyed by railway in a few hours to Raneegung, over the first stage on its onward journey.

Raneegung—then the terminus of the East Indian Railway—was at that period a great rendezvous of the army proceeding to the seat of the war, and warlike preparations on a formidable scale were going on there with amazing rapidity. Masses of troops, horses for cavalry and artillery, baggage animals, immense parks of guns, magazine and commissariat stores, countless dolies or hospital litters, camp equipage and innumerable busy followers, demonstrated the unrelenting realities and stern agitation of the times.

But all this bustle and chaos did not trouble us long; for before we could realise—by the warlike scenes around us—our sudden transformation from civilians to soldiers, we were "told off" to join a force proceeding to the North-West Provinces.

At midnight therefore we stood to arms in readiness to march. In front of all were to move several companies of European infantry, having a troop of horse-artillery in immediate communication with them:

they were to be followed by us—and the "us," I may remark, means, and always will mean in this narrative, the Bengal Yeomanry Cavalry—the whole being covered by a native regiment of the Madras Army as a rear guard. The line of march having thus been formed, the bugles rang out the "advance," and away we moved.

Our route lay along that famous Grand Trunk Road leading to the North-West Provinces, and on its smooth metallic surface men and animals, fresh from the first cantonment, swung along at a smart pace, and reached the halting ground as the crowing of farm-yard tenantry proclaimed the commencement of dawn. Here to our yet inexperienced eyes the change was striking. Tents were pitched, arms piled, sentries posted, fires kindled, breakfasts served—in short, the whole force, with its long train of camp followers and beasts of burden, settled down at ease; whilst amid the novelty and routine of camp life the day glided away pleasantly enough, and at eventide retiring to rest in good time, men slept soundly and refreshed themselves for the morrow's work. So, in a word, began and closed the first march at the opening of our campaign.

At the break of day on the following morning the march of the force began again, and was conducted in the same manner as before, until a portion of it was suddenly detached from the main body in order to pursue mutineers through Sonthalistan. Of course hurried inquiries into the cause of this change in our

pre-arranged route at once passed along the line ; but as suspicious tidings of disaffection among the Sepoys at Deoghur had reached Raneegung before our departure from thence, we did not receive any very unlooked-for communication when it was told us that the garrison had mutinied at that outlandish cantonment.

A lightly equipped column—formed of European infantry and ourselves—soon therefore entered that wild and uninteresting country of the aboriginal Sonthals, who, although their homes lay in so isolated and apparently tiger-haunted a region, seemed happy and contented with their lot. From stage to stage they cheerfully supplied the Commissariat with ample provisions, and this was all the more surprising as for days together we traversed almost barren hills and dense jungles. Nevertheless the lowlands were exceedingly fertile, while horned cattle and sheep and domestic poultry appeared abundant in many of the villages through which we passed.

The column having at length threaded its way through a considerable portion of this savage-looking country, gained a breakneck road leading to a plateau on which the station of Deoghur stood. And here, for the first time, we beheld and bore witness to the influence of the appalling whirlwind of desolation that was passing over India.

Deoghur itself lay enwrapped in sepulchral silence of death, and all that was once the military cantonments in ruins and ashes ; while in a well-kept garden

close by, the faithful domestic servants (who had buried their murdered masters) pointed out to us the recent graves of those who had fallen a sacrifice to the relentless fury of the bloodthirsty Sepoys. They also told us that on that fatal spot a few loyal Sepoys actually killed some of the mutineers in defence of their officers.

Although many days had elapsed since the departure of the mutineers from Deoghur, still the hope of intercepting the fiends stimulated pursuit, and onwards we pressed. Over the hilly tracks, along execrable roads, through leafy labyrinths, down deep and broad ravines, for several wearisome days we traversed long and rapid marches, but all to no purpose. The pursuit proved ineffectual, the expedition fruitless. The start of the fugitives was too great; and unencumbered with baggage or other impedimenta, they easily escaped towards the North-West Provinces.

While struggling to overtake these mutineers, we were attacked by that mortal scourge, curse, and blight of India—and the most terrible enemy in the world—the cholera, and as its assault often begins with death, a few members of the Corps fell victims to its attack.

By this time having fairly spanned Sonthalistan, and pioneered our way along the plains beyond it, we debouched from straggling villages into a lonely road, where a milestone pillar set up at the junction of several zigzag paths indexed the distance to "Holy Gyah," according to the inscription, four miles; so we

marched on, and finally fording a broad and shallow stream, entered that "venerated town," to find that even so "sacred" a place of pilgrimage had not escaped the mischievous villainy of scoundrels, revelling in the wanton destruction of property, and in all kinds of devilry.

Throughout the Bengal Presidency, Gyah is known and reverenced by the Hindūs as a holy town, replete with hallowed mythological traditions; and, in a sentence, a "holy town" in India means a place crammed with quaint temples and grotesque shrines, where astounding idolatry reigns supreme, where pilgrims flock in crowds all the year round, and where those insolent and painted vagabonds, the pagan priests, luxuriate and fatten on the superstitious liberality of a bigoted and deluded people, while under pretences of sanctimonious priestcraft, they cloak sensual intrigue and sin with impunity. At the same time, however, they maintain—as numberless priests of other nationalities maintain—that they are not necessarily bound, because they are priests, to live and lead the lives of saints!

Whatever charms of antiquity Gyah may have possessed, we had no time to explore them; for immediately on our arrival there, we prepared to start in pursuit of another body of mutineers hovering about the districts bordering on the frontier of Nipal.

CHAPTER III.

THE necessary arrangements for long marches having been rapidly completed, we turned our backs on the "holy town," and started for Patna along a pleasant road that lay by the side of vast plains concealed with sprouting corn, and in places fringed with immense belts of trees and evergreen shrubs, which only disappeared when we entered an avenue of miles in extent leading into Patna.

To speak of silvan avenues as stretching miles in extent, would seem to imply that they had been measured with the proverbial "long bow"; but in passing, it may be mentioned that in many parts of India magnificent avenues stretch scores of miles without a break.

The town of Patna, though large, is in no wise very remarkable. It contains, however, an immense population of disloyal Mahomedans, and is one of the great centres of disaffection and intrigue in India. Situated on the right bank of the Ganges, it presents a rather prepossessing panoramic view of an Oriental riverside town; and viewed from the water it is a long, irregular line of countless buildings closely packed together in grotesque shapes of various sizes, while prominently

visible in its midst are some picturesque mosques, and a huge bell-shaped building, with a winding outer staircase leading to the top.

We crossed the Ganges at Patna. The river was at its lowest level; still the passage, beginning with dawn glimmering upon our difficulties, continued the whole of the day, and did not terminate before the shadows of eventide compelled us to bivouac on its bank opposite the town. And here we endeavoured to make ourselves as comfortable for the night as circumstances would allow, in a wretched encampment teeming with mosquitoes and frogs, and reeking with malaria exhaled from putrid vegetation on the margin of the river.

But now no more sombre thoughts, for sleep cradled in the arms of fatigue had lulled dull care to rest; while all life, too, reposed in the quietude of a serenely lovely night, and nothing but the monotonous clink of the sentinels' scabbards, trailing along the ground as they paced to and fro, stirred the profound silence of the slumbering camp.

On the following morning as the sun rose, we rose too, and the forward movement began through a country in general feature similar to that we had recently traversed, but apparently without any signs of anarchy in it. In fact, there was nothing to indicate a hostile country; and in proof of its tranquillity, over the vast expanse of the plains, as far as the scope of vision, on every side corn was sprouting in the greatest exuberance; and commissariat supplies were found in

abundance at every stage. Without therefore encountering any obstacle on our line of march, we reached the little town of Pūsah—worthy of notice only on account of the enormous stud of horses it contained.

Meanwhile the alarming rumours relating to the mutineers—of whom mention has already been made—rendered it necessary for us to halt at Pūsah, until reliable intelligence could be received in place of the numerous and exaggerated reports that were in circulation within and around the neighbouring districts. Some rumours asserted that the revolted troops were on their way to loot the Government stud; others declared that they had broken away through the adjoining country; while a few maintained, and with truth, as the sequel will show, that they were in a "fix" for want of boats on the impetuous river that barred their way to the Upper Provinces.

Our "forced halts" at Pūsah afforded an opportunity for re-organising the transport train, which was found defective for forced marches. And instead of that "awful machine," the country cart, yoked to crawling bullocks that ordinarily averaged a "motion" of two or three miles an hour, and accomplished a distance of three or four leagues a day, and that only under the influence of perpetual and tremendous shouting, barbarous castigation, and tails twisted into corkscrews until the joints cracked, elephants and those hardy animals the pack-ponies were substituted for the conveyance of the baggage.

While we remained encamped at Pūsah, among other means adopted to beguile the weary hours, races and steeplechases were "got up"; and as the place had an excellent course, and the weather was delightful and exhilarating, the pastime helped to dispel grumblings, and in some instances imaginary grievances which inaction had commenced to sow.

So passed a few days, each of which brought with it both its amusements and its anxieties. Before a week had terminated, however, it was evident by the hurry-skurry prevailing in the striking of tents and packing of baggage that an immediate headlong rush to the Nipal frontier was in store for us. So we started at once, and jogged along throughout the night, and by daylight, finding the baggage animals keeping well up, we marched on for a few hours longer, and then halted for the day amidst a fertile country verdant with waving crops of several kinds.

I shall pass rapidly over the stages travelled during the ensuing few days, as their monotony was only dispelled on our entering the district of Purneah. Here the features of the country changed alternately from rich cultivated fields, to immense grass plains; and from those again to enormous crops of ripening scarlet chillies, which gave the whole landscape a bloodshot appearance of a singular and—as times were—very appropriate effect.

We also passed incalculable acres of poppy fields, and their variegated bloom of red, white, and purple in the golden sunlight adorned a sublimely pretty

floral scene of many miles stretching along our route. And as we gazed on these fascinating fields, which in their beauty looked as if brilliantly bespangled with swarming butterflies, it was strange to realise the curious fact that in so beautiful a bloom lurked also a deadly poison. For is it not a notable fact in the opium trade that the poppy blossom not only fascinates India with its product, but demoralises, if not kills, China with its venom? while the Government piles up mountains of gold rising from the plains of "Opiumana"—to coin a name in a flowery and figurative sense—as memorial monuments typical of gratitude to both! Hence no apology is needed for my turning aside from our line of march to bestow this apparently eccentric, and perhaps frivolous panegyric on those whom it may concern. But let us hope that the day may come, when the opium revenue will cease to fill the coffers of a Christian Government, at the expense and demoralisation of a heathen empire, like that of China.

When we had advanced thus far towards the confines of Nipal, the indomitable ponies began gradually to yield to the toil they had hitherto sustained stoutly, and in considerable numbers, as they staggered along under their loads, dropped by the wayside and perished; the baggage would in consequence have to be divided among that carried by yet vigorous animals, and they being thus overweighted would straggle up hours after we had bivouacked; and then the time usually occupied in serving out and cooking

the rations was the most disagreeable part of the day's work; for in addition to being already well tired and desiring repose, exhausted and famished men had to superintend the preparation of unsavoury meals, and postpone rest found in sleep of which they stood sorely in need.

In this unsatisfactory way we continued to push on from one day to another, until at length the beasts of burden having been fairly beaten down, we were compelled to part with our baggage, and "stow away" upon our horses, and about our own persons some indispensable things for our use on the road. And that night, after receiving many uneasy salutations—in the way of salāms—from our servants and camp followers, whose countenances showed apprehension at being forsaken, without even a guard, to follow us as best they could, we struck into a well-trodden path running over low, sterile lands in a south-easterly direction.

CHAPTER IV.

ALTHOUGH at this period disaffection lurked in almost every corner of the Bengal Presidency, and the greater part of Northern India was in open rebellion, and in Oudh (except the ground at the Ahlum Bāgh, in the suburbs of Luknow, on which a British force stood), not a vestige of the Government authority had yet been re-established, and albeit we were daily nearing a body of revolted troops, there were no signs of anarchy, nor any manifest feelings of hostility discernible among the people of these districts.

It is true there could be no confidence, and there was none; but the friendly disposition of the inhabitants may be considered sufficiently apparent, when the fact is stated that the rustic food and fodder supplied by them at every halt, amply provided for the pressing wants of the Corps.

It were tedious, however, to relate the untoward difficulties we encountered in these flying marches, and to recount the rough-and-ready way in which we were compelled to meet the troubles of our position—to hint at each volunteer personally attending to his horse; to tell of our "sleeping accommodation" for weeks together being the bare ground, screened some-

times against the heavy dews of December by leafy canopies of trees, the projecting roots of which served as extemporised pillows; to speak of the novel or unique spectacle presented in joints of mutton spitted on sabres—with which the sheep had had their heads struck off—grilling over huge green-wood fires, and then, half raw and well smoked, devoured without salt or sauce with a relish, not to say gusto, that Soyer himself, or even genuine cannibals, might have envied; to note that roasted rice pounded into powder with the butt-end of our carbines proved an acceptable substitute for tea or coffee; and, finally, to remark that breakfasting on parched grain, and boiled milk, was certainly not very unusual with us during these fast and furious rides.

English readers may be slightly surprised at our finding time, while rushing headlong over the country, to indulge in the oceans of *boiled* milk to which we were treated at these hurried *al fresco* breakfasts. But the Hindūs who supplied us never use milk—not even for making butter—unless it is thoroughly boiled, like water for making tea. In its raw state they consider it little better than the animal morbid matter, and often call it, by way of execration, "white blood," and believe that if it is used without undergoing purification by fire, its virus is sure to inoculate the human body with some virulent disease, or develop some malady to which it may be predisposed. Apart, however, from the open confession that, in upholding the opinion of these Hindūs, I would as soon eat raw

beef as drink raw milk, it may be appropriate to mention here that in all my experience of nearly thirty years in India I never knew, or heard of, a single case of diphtheria in man, woman, or child who used boiled milk; while, at the same time, I have known several Europeans, who were in the habit of taking milk as it is generally used in Europe, to die of the disease, when not a native among whom they were living, and who numbered in proportion at least a thousand to each European, showed a sign of the disease at all.

Some days having passed in the manner mentioned above, we at length gained a sandy tract, on the banks of the Kose river, where the savage scenery was impressively grand. Taking its rise among the Himalaya Mountains, the Kose, deep and impetuous, winds its course through, and emerges from, the sombre recesses of well-nigh utterly impenetrable jungle. This sub-mountain jungle is called the Terai, and it stretches along parallel to the base of the Himalaya Range, and varies in breadth, on a rough average, from ten to twenty miles.

Without noticing, however, the insignificant bit of it at present before us, I will here briefly speak of its prominent features as they appear interspersed throughout the whole of that wondrous region; so that the reader may form some idea of the nature of the country in which we were at this time employed.

Roughly though correctly sketched, either by pen or pencil, the Terai is a vast trackless belt of forest

covering hundreds of miles with almost every variety of luxuriant tropical vegetation; and in innumerable localities it is intersected by rivers, mountain-torrents, and frightful ravines choked up with thorny underwood, and interlaced with bamboos, ratans, and other rope-like plants and creepers ; and in places it is diversified with savage-looking hills densely draped in dark foliage, and timber of stupendous size; while in its midst are enormous abysses filled with putrid water and interminable swamps, which eject the poisonous streams that silently and invisibly glide like mythological serpents through this enormous jungle-entangled region.

Though the inexhaustible profusion of vegetation is the most striking and impressive feature of the Terai, its exuberance in animal life is certainly not much less characteristic ; and in numbers and variety, it may be said to exhibit greater richness in the department of zoology, than any other region on the globe.

Passing over its insignificant hordes of the wild animal kingdom, I shall cursorily notice only in passing some of its more prominent denizens ; and among the prolific category, enumerate the buffalo, the samber, the lilgye, and deer of several species in incalculable numbers. Then the deeper recesses of the Terai have their appropriate occupants : there the elephant, the rhinoceros, the tiger,—leopards, bears, hyenas, etc., may be computed literally by thousands and thousands. The serpent species, from the formid-

able boa-constrictor to the dangerous cobra, abound. Among the venomous reptiles there are many varieties of huge lizards, and alligators of enormous size swarm in the streams and marshes. The feathered tribe, from the magnificent golden eagle to birds unknown in ornithology, are also numerous ; while insects, infinite in variety, infest these regions in endless myriads.

The malarial climate of the Terai, however, is so deadly to Europeans that they are prevented from tarrying in its fever-breeding jungles. Were it otherwise, sportsmen in search of big game would astonish, with their "bags," the most ardent hunters in any part of the world.

Behind the Terai are the lower hills and their subsidiary dells, also covered with evergreen woods, and timber of such gigantic size that the very sight of it fills one with astonishment beyond conception,—trees of from twenty to thirty feet in girth, and, although centuries old, upright as pillars, straight as darts, and growing to a height of two hundred feet or more. Beyond, stretching like a huge irregular barrier, rise the noble Himalaya, and the lofty and fantastic peaks of the mountains enveloped in everlasting winter. To associate tropical India with the North Pole would seem ridiculously fictitious; nevertheless there, before our very eyes, tower the ice-bound giants of wonderland, which even in the height of summer freeze all the day through, despite the sun, and look down from their perpetual frozen abode upon the poor broiling creatures on the fiery plains below. While farther

to the north, far above the others, to an elevation of more than twenty-eight thousand feet above sea-level, Kunchin Junga, with its majestic head right away in endless space, distinct and well defined under the clear blue canopy of heaven, looks in its incomparable grandeur like an isolated mountain of molten silver, towering to the skies from an aerial world of eternal glaciers and snow.

The spot from whence this view is obtained, and from which we were not very far bivouacked, commands the most magnificent prospect of the dazzling Snowy Range visible from any place in India. Nothing in Nature on her grandest scale can be conceived more awe-inspiring, or awfully sublime. Talk about Mont Blanc, why, that lofty snow-capped peak in Europe is, by comparison, a mere hillock to the giant Kunchin Junga in High Asia. And so prominent and stupendous is this wonderful monarch of mountains, that the indigenous mountaineers actually believe its geographical position to be—as expressed in their own words—the centre of the terrestrial world, and its summit, towering up to heaven, they say is half-way to the celestial realm above, whereon rests the hallowed footstool of the Great God of Heaven! Just as under the influence of similar superstitious nonsense, the inhabitants of the Peshawur valley, about a thousand miles or perhaps more away in the Punjāb, call a snow-capped peak Tukht-i-Suleimān, or "Solomon's throne"! The Viceroy of India has also a throne on these incomparable mountains; and in consequence Simla has been

the regular summer residence of Government for far more than half a century. It is, therefore, astonishing to note how little this delightful salubrious region has been opened up, and how little we really know of this vast mountainous world within itself. Now, as the atmospheric temperature on the plains of Upper India for about half the year may be compared with that of a veritable glowing furnace, it is quite distressing to find that the charms of the Himalaya—with their invigorating climate, suggestive only of the most lovely "cool summer" in England — should remain so neglected, and little better than a trackless wilderness in Africa. And that, too, when even the present wretchedly laid out and badly built old hill stations (to wit, Simla, Mussoorie, Nyne-Tal, and others) of the "dark ages," so prominently indicate the feasibility with which this Asiatic paradise might be transformed into a flourishing European colony.

Those who know the Himalaya best, will readily admit that numerous localities in the interior of that vast unreclaimed region are by soil, water, and climate admirably suited for English settlements; and as it is proverbial that if Englishmen have a will to penetrate and explore a trackless wilderness, they can generally find a way, it seems almost incredible that after so great a lapse of time, embracing over a century, no serious attempt has yet been made to rear even what may be called a miniature colony in the susceptible heart of this beautiful mountainous tract, and its countless fair valleys, with delightful atmospheric

conditions, peaceful and soothing surroundings, sweet sparkling streams, and ever-echoing cataracts, clear and brilliant as diamonds. Here, too, in and along these fresh and charming valleys, melodious with the songs of beautiful birds, the various forests contain innumerable handsome and gigantic trees of many English species, such as the oak, chestnut, pine, birch, etc.; and among those of native growth I will mention only the superb Magnolia as really the Queen of the Forest, when in her spring toilet and crowned with the lovely bloom that scents the air with its honeyed fragrance. Then again, conspicuous among the indigenous fruit trees, are the cherry, walnut, fig, medlar, etc.—not to exclude such modest dainties as raspberries, strawberries, nuts, etc.—all growing literally wild. As to the infinite varieties of the fern and flora, my feeble pen would droop in attempting to portray their rare and surpassing beauty—unfading beauty, ever lovable, yet never admired; ever blooming, yet never seen, except by the wild beasts and birds that hold sway over the neglected tracts of which I have here drawn a brief and rough sketch. But there can be little doubt that, in years to come, Colonisation will stretch its enterprising arms over these magnificent mountains, to the advantage of England's prestige, in spreading her civilising influence among the semi-barbarous and heterogeneous people (and their name is legion), inhabiting the border-lands, and mysterious unknown countries stretching away from the Great Himalaya Chain into remote and Central Asia.

But I have said enough, and to spare, on this obviously prolific subject, and reluctantly leave it as irrelevant to the narrative in hand. Before doing so, however, I will add that the intelligent reader will easily understand that the writer has been briefly speaking of the Terai and of its occupants, and also of the glorious Himalaya (some of the remotest parts of which he has trodden, where even to the present day no other "white man's stride" has reached), from experience gained, during many sporting tours, and adventurous wanderings over their wildest tracts, in happy days long gone by.

Soon after crossing the Kose, we reached the encampment of a small European force with which we were to co-operate. And here, our jaded horses having been attended to, we disencumbered ourselves of arms and accoutrements for the first time since our flying march began, and stretching down at rest beneath the shadows of lofty trees, we slept in bundles of straw, coiled up like hedgehogs, with that unbroken soundness familiar to health and fatigue.

CHAPTER V.

THUS far it seemed as if these mutineers—to whom we were indebted for our late trials—were caught in a fatal trap. For here they were surrounded and intercepted by the Terai, the Kose, and a force of European troops; and moreover, as the friendly relationship between the Government of India and Nipal appeared true and genuine, we naturally concluded that the Nipalese themselves would readily help us to clear this part of the country—adjoining their own—of the cut-throats who had taken shelter in it, and we also anticipated no delay or difficulty in accomplishing this object; but how far, and with what results, these anticipations were realised will be seen by-and-bye.

That the mutineers had not crossed the river, was a fact known to us all; but the actual locality of their bivouac no one knew—not even the Nipalese inhabitants of the surrounding villages! And yet, they were busy in circulating rumours to the effect that the villains, apprehending certain death from jungle fever by lingering in the Terai, had risked the passage of the river in the darkness of night, and had thus succeeded in getting away!

Needless to say, a deaf ear was turned to these

suspicious rumours, and without much ado, we at once started on a farcical search of hide-and-seek along the outskirts of the jungles; and presently found ourselves floundering in treacherous quicksands which were terribly dangerous; so much so indeed that the local guides, who were slowly and cautiously directing our course, informed us that even elephants would not escape being swallowed up bodily, if they ventured over some of them.

Really, our adventurous ride across these quicksands, though it may not have been a military spectacle of an imposing kind, in the equestrian art it certainly presented a very laughable scene; and the climax in the comical performance was reached, when suddenly we were compelled to hold on like "grim death" to frantic horses plunging, rearing, struggling, wriggling, in short performing a sort of romping "Sir Roger de Coverley," or a fantastic rocking-horse dance, in their nondescript efforts to get through these frightful sands. At length, however, we passed out of them, and found ourselves on the margin of a boundless ocean of bushes and brushwood foliage; but the sun was then setting, and it being too late, especially in a trackless wilderness like this, to proceed farther that day, we bivouacked for the night, and tried to forget our "roughings"—to use an impressive phraseology of the Corps—in repose. But the weather was bitterly cold, in fact the temperature was at freezing point, and the gnawing wind that moaned through the surrounding trees wafted slumber away.

In the absence of clothing it was found impossible to sleep; and all around the bivouac the horses kept up a restless stamp and tramp, while deep and discordant growls issued from the men, as if from the bowels of the earth, on every side. Our only comfort therefore was the fire—kindled by the "guides" to scare away, as they said, the beasts of prey. Towards midnight, while we still sat smoking and basking over the fire, and a sepulchral stillness reigned over the jungles—interrupted occasionally by the loud and dismal howl of jackals—we heard sounds far more impressive and striking than had yet fallen on our ears, sounds as of shouts of exultation long and loud, and savage yells sharp and clear pervading the surrounding gloom. With bated breath and necks craned we listened, while the sentinels called out to one another, and confirmed to each other what had been heard. What were those sounds? whence did they come? could the mutineers be in our vicinity or on the move? were questions earnestly asked, and subsequently answered by a grim apparition in the jungles.

At break of day, after passing a wretched and sleepless night, we pioneered our way along a web of thorny bushes that stretched from the Terai into the plains on all sides, and in solemn silence rode on, backwards and forwards, now here, now there, according to the directions of the "guides"; until at last, a few days having passed in this "wild-goose chase"—this jungly promenade—all hopes of discovering the rebel camp were abandoned; and therefore, for the last time, as

the insects began to hum the decline of day and gloom gathered around, we halted for the night in this wild solitude.

Dawn broke obscurely through a mist that did not disperse until noon, and then our retrograde "goose-step" movement towards the plains began; and presently we were gladdened by seeing the open country again, with much the same feeling as castaway mariners are wont to enjoy when in sight of land once more.

But what was to be done next? To abandon the search altogether in uncertainty would doubtless stimulate the panic in the districts where its symptoms had already appeared. Sinister rumours gained ground; alarm spread abroad; a body of revolted troops was known to be "somewhere" in the neighbourhood, and unless their locality was traced out, or their mysterious disappearance accounted for, the departure of the column from so inhospitable a region could not be sanctioned. At all events, that being the "order" of the day, a second search, with the aid of Nipal Gūrkhas, instead of us, immediately commenced.

While the adventurous hunt on the outer fringe of jungles was going on, time with ourselves, now bivouacked in Nipal territory, passed in vigilant monotony, and without any affair of moment occurring. In these inactive moments, therefore, I subjoin a few remarks concerning the Nipal troops, called Gūrkhas—with whom we are now in confederate intercourse, and with whom I was well acquainted in days prior to

those at present under notice—premising, however, that these scraps, disengaged from all trammels of prejudice and thrown together in the following paragraphs, are intended for the sake merely of readers unacquainted with the "Highlanders" of Nipal.

In the first place, then, it is permissible to say that real Gūrkhas are *raræ aves* out of Nipal, and a race by themselves; so much so indeed that if they should ever have occasion to leave their country, it is never for any length of time. True, the Government of India has several so-called Gūrkha regiments in its service; but the men of those regiments, though excellent soldiers, are not Gūrkhas, but belong to the numerous tribes of the Himalaya, and not to the *Khas*, or real Gūrkha race.

They are eminently cheerful, good-tempered, free from prejudice to Europeans; and, though short-statured, are a thickset, broad-shouldered, and large-limbed race of men, with features rarely prepossessing. Their predominant vices are licentiousness, avarice, cruelty, and treachery; their virtues hardihood, patience of fatigue, patriotism, and love of liberty. Their affection for Mammon is as intensely ardent as that of their Hindū neighbours. But they shun as much as possible mercantile pursuits; for, according to their social ideas of trade, a trader holds a peculiar position, in so much that should he become rich he is called a knave, if he continues poor he is deemed a fool! In fact, to reveal their sentiments in this matter clearly, they regard all traders as no better

than plausible rogues! They are blessed with what in common phraseology would be termed "iron constitutions," rarely, if ever, seem sick or sorry, have no experience of medicine, and, as a matter of fact, it would be impossible to find a healthier race in Asia, or discover a more pre-eminently jovial set of fellows than they are. And they possess an amount of rational "chaff" during convivial feasts very seldom, if ever, to be found among people so completely isolated and secluded from foreign intercourse as they always have been; and this is all the more striking, when at such feasts and annual festivals they become strenuous worshippers of Bacchus, and when it is by no means exceptionally rare for these martial spirits to drink off at a draught, or gulp down, full "tumblers" (called kuttorās) of some form of alcohol, stronger than raw rum, as if the liquor were water!

In addition to their military equipments, they carry (as may be said of the whole nation) the ancient weapon of Nipal—namely, the terrible kokre, which, parenthetically described, is a massive curved knife some twenty inches long and about five broad, manufactured from the finest-tempered steel, and whetted with an edge as sharp as that of a razor. The reader, who may not have seen the kokre used, cannot by mere description form any conception of its power in the hands of a strong man skilful in the art of wielding it. Even we ourselves, while looking on at some Nipalese sacrificing animals to their gods, could hardly believe our eyes when we saw the head of a buffalo

severed from the neck by a single stroke from this truly formidable weapon. The man who performed this amazing feat informed us, with broad grins following a convulsive "Ha, ha!" that he could as easily decapitate two human heads with one blow; and a confederate bystander explained the purport of this savage remark by observing that, in divorce cases, not the ordinary law of civilisation, but the all-powerful kokre, summarily settles, and effectually avenges any injury to the matrimonial bed. A more useful weapon it would be impossible to place in the hands of any man than the kokre is in those of the Nipale. He uses it for all purposes, and without it he seldom stirs out abroad. It is his sword, his table-knife, his razor, and his nail-parer; with it he clears the jungle for his cultivation, builds his log-hut, skins the animals that he slaughters—in short, without the kokre he is as helpless as a child; with it he is a formidable warrior, as well as a man of all work.

A few days have passed; the season of Christmas-tide approached, and time, as it went on, revealed indications in a manner not to be mistaken, and into which it was not difficult to see, that our worthy "allies" had been engaged in other plans than those which appeared upon the surface; for by this time it had become self-evident that they had been watching, and waiting for a favourable opportunity to throw off the hypocritical mask, in which they had so long performed a deceitful farce; and now that, by the co-operation of their own troops with ours, they conceived

their part plausibly played out, with a coolness and nonchalance characteristic of their race, they unanimously proclaimed the escape of the rebels, and in confirmation of their statement voluntarily offered to point out the deserted rebel lair! Of course this unexpected and doubtful news at once aroused an excitement and commotion that soon culminated in a general rush of armed men to the indicated spot, where were found proofs of a recent encampment, and a few dead horses corroborative of the news.

It is needless to describe the rage and indignation that prevailed in the camp, when it was discovered that every man in the expedition had been fooled and duped to hunt for rebels who had already crossed the Kose, and fled during that night when those loud and protracted shouts were heard in the jungles; and so, it will suffice to say, this jungly melodrama, in the end, confirmed the suspicions that had rested on our "allies" as to their having been "charmed" by the plundered treasure of the mutineers, and thus—shall I say it?—that "golden wand" wafted them into thin air!

We were now off on another flying march, and for days together literally lived in the saddle, and rode until our horses were fagged well-nigh to death. But this sweeping and rattling ride—dogging the trail of the fugitives—had the desired effect in pacifying apprehension among the European community of the neighbouring districts, and restoring confidence in a part of the country where alarm, bordering on panic, had already begun to exhibit itself uncomfortably.

Christmas in the Mutiny!

When did Englishmen ever pass a more extraordinary Christmas Day than we did in 1857?

Bivouacked by the roadside in a lovely country surrounded with evergreen foliage, like the holly, decorating the scene, we rested in a headlong pursuit under wreaths formed of sabres hanging in the trees over our heads like the mistletoe, and thought of all the dear ones in Old England at home, and toasted them in copious draughts of warm milk, while we feasted ourselves on the only food procurable—namely, parched grain, and some native fruit!

CHAPTER VI.

THE mutineers having vanished, we turned our faces to the westward, and marched by comparatively easy stages through Tirhoot; and as we journeyed on from day to day in this district, we found it more attractive in pleasant scenery than any we had yet traversed. True, the general aspect of the landscape was monotonous; but where, it may be asked, on the plains of Upper India is the landscape not monotonous? You might travel thousands of miles, and yet the boundless plains, with almost unvarying rural features, would meet your gaze everywhere. You might look in every direction for miles and miles along the scene for some rare or novel object to break the interminable monotony of the vast outstretching country, but you would look in vain. Whichever way you may twist or turn, the clustering villages of the peasantry; the hamlet homestead, with its sugar or oil mills; the irrigation wells dotting the fields; the evergreen groves (*topes*) of mango, tamarind, and other fruit, or ordinary tropical trees; the ruined buildings of ancient times; the Hindū or Mahomedan temples or mosques; now and again rivers, or cities, or towns, or relics of bygone ages, mingle in the picture; and so on and on, miles

succeed miles in wonderful and measureless panoramic monotony of rural beauty, which gives the general aspect of the country a look as if it had been cast in the same beautiful mould, and spread out over the land by the same artistic hand. But in contrast to this uniformity of the scenery that of Tirhoot is exceptionally superior in versatility; and is all the more enhanced by a succession of attractive residences scattered over the district amidst picturesque grounds, where extensive factories, and thousands of highly cultivated acres of indigo, mark the industry and prosperity of the Planters. The hospitality, too, for which the Planters in India have always been famed, we found still prevailing unimpaired in this part of the country, and our march through it to Mozufferpūr was one of hilarious enjoyment.

As Mozufferpūr was the *sudder*, or chief town in Tirhoot, we halted there for a few days, in order to rest the horses and baggage animals for the work on the contemplated line of march. In the place itself there was little worthy of remark, except that it had escaped the deplorable scenes and general calamities of the evil times, and looked pleasant and invited repose.

Our "gala days"—as they were termed—at Mozufferpūr were often recalled to memory with positive ecstasy, when contrasting them with the gloomy ones we subsequently experienced. It was New Year's time, the season of general holiday, the first we had had since our hard work began, and we took advantage of it to enjoy a downright "jolly" halt at this delight-

ful station, until in weather that had set in wet we moved to Motehāre. It rained incessantly, and to journey in a saturated skin is at all times far from agreeable; indeed, few hardships to cavalry can be more intolerable than the discomfort attending long marches over flooded roads and through torrents of rain—no condition more dismal and annoying than that of campaigning life in such inclement weather. We toiled away on the surface of immense submerged plains, and in due course arrived at Motehāre, which small station we found deserted by the European community, though it appeared untouched by the remorseless hands of rebels.

While on the march, I pause again for a moment at another little station named Segowle, to note the story of a tragedy in which the actors were the demoniac troopers of a cavalry regiment. It was the only corps stationed at this insignificant cantonment, and so isolated was its position that it seemed beyond the reach of fanatical emissaries or seditions proclamations. Besides, we were told that the Commandant of the regiment never ceased to believe in the loyalty of his men, and over and over again declared them "staunch," and proof against treachery swerving them from their allegiance to the Government. Sad, therefore, it is to relate that he was murdered in cold blood by these very men whom he had thus extolled. Morbid and infatuated confidence, however, led numerous officers of the Bengal Army to similarly trust

bloodthirsty traitors at the commencement of the Mutiny; and they lost their lives in consequence. But, after all, it is not conjectural to say, this "infatuated confidence" originated from ignorance of the inborn Asiatic deceit, and honeyed lies, which are ever hidden under the smooth language and manners of Orientals, and by which many Englishmen—though they may have lived in India among the natives for years—are so easily deceived.

It was with no reluctance that we passed on from this sad and silent cantonment, and in spite of frightful roads, rendered in places almost impassable by the recent rains, entered the Bitteah *rāj*. And here, to relieve the dryness of antecedent details, I may remark in passing that late in the evening of our arrival in the town, we were not a little surprised to hear the tolling of the "vesper bell"; and yet not a single European was living in the place, nor even in its neighbourhood. We were, however, told that Bitteah contained a substantially built Roman Catholic chapel in thorough repair, and that the appurtenances of every description appropriated to the uses of the religion were in perfect preservation. Hence it would seem an interesting question to ask how this Papal sanctuary, situated as it was in the very port-hole of the rebellion, escaped destruction or desecration, when elsewhere the rebels destroyed or defiled all Christian churches and chapels.

However, as the chapel at Bitteah happened to

be in a town that belonged to one of the honourable feudal lords, or Barons of Bengal, and not to the rapacious East India Company, it seemed self-evident that only for this reason it was spared. But I am wandering beyond our line of march, and from the Gunduk river, which flows calmly through extremely fertile country, and separates Bengal Proper from the North-West Provinces.

CHAPTER VII.

HARDLY an incident showing an insurrectionary temper in the people, occurred while our route lay through Bengal Proper ; but no sooner had we crossed the quiet Gunduk, and invaded the Gorukpūr district, where martial law had been proclaimed, than the hostile disposition of the inhabitants began to make itself manifest without the slightest disguise.

The sudden mortality among our horses and beasts of burden inspired us with misgivings that they were falling a sacrifice to poison ; but as cattle-poisoning with arsenic, for the sake of the hides, is followed by low-caste curriers as a professional calling in many parts of India, this mortality may not, perhaps, have been occasioned by feelings of hostility among the people with whom our acquaintance had only just commenced. To allay our suspicions, however, the carcases of all animals that died in camp, were always sabred and slashed into ribbons prior to our changing ground.

The *budmāshes* (vagabonds), too, were "up and doing," and with such daring boldness were they at work that some were actually seized in broad daylight freebooting in disguise on the outskirts of the camp.

Now, as we carried "the law" in our own free hands, and had almost entirely thrown off the restraints of civilisation, they were without ceremony lashed to trees, and thrashed with a severity that in other times would have been far from gratifying to witness. Still, it must be confessed that, for correcting native vagabonds in the most effectual way during those days, there was nothing like the application of unrelenting rods of iron.

While passing rapidly through the Gorukpūr station, we were unable to notice the full extent of the dismal wreck the rebels had left behind them. But, as we rode along, the loyal inhabitants of the town informed us that, immediately the Europeans abandoned the station, their houses were occupied by the rebel usurper—Mahomed Husain—and his followers; that the Christian church and cemetery had been desecrated, and that the whole neighbourhood at once became a huge den of iniquity and vice.

As we advanced, the signs of anarchy became more prominently defined. Fortifications, or rather loopholed earthworks, erected here and there, forcibly illustrated systematised rebellion; while the people began to put on a more insolent air.

Wild rumours, too, were busy concerning the usurper of the Gorukpūr district, who, it was stated, had proclaimed a *jehād* (Crusade, or Holy War) against all Europeans invading *his* district! Neither was the intelligence received from the Oudh frontier cheering; and among other evil tidings that got spread abroad

it was reported: that the territory adjacent to the river Ghagrā swarmed with insurgents, and that the very position to which we were proceeding was not free from them. Nevertheless, discrediting these rumours, onward we pressed; and as within thirty miles or so in front of our right flank a Nipalese "ally" army, many thousands strong, was moving on towards Luknow, we did not anticipate experiencing annoyance, or interruption, on the line of our march through this hostile and dangerous section of the country.

I have already stated that in these flying marches the trees stood duty for tents; and as we had now arrived at a large *tope* wherein some masonry wells marked a halting stage, we bivouacked, and made preparations for passing the night there.

Hard by this bivouac, suspended in the *tope*, we saw for the first time the fruits of retributive punishment in the corpses of rebels dangling from many branches of the trees, and recording the vengeance of some advanced British force, which had left in its trail these ghastly memorials of stern retribution. Some of the bodies—encased in gorgeous apparel—hung so close to the ground that the limbs to the knees had been eaten away by pariah dogs and jackals; while the upper portions, literally "alive" through decomposition, tainted the very atmosphere of the surrounding neighbourhood. A more revolting spectacle it would be difficult to imagine; and we were only too glad when the hour arrived for us to leave these fetid

fumes and hideous relics of horror, and respond to the braying of trumpets rousing the Corps to march on again.

Our next halting ground was in the town of Buste; where the inhabitants—though with disguised sycophancy they pretended to be pleased with our arrival—could not hide from us their hostile looks, which seemed to express the truth that we were not welcome.

The only animals for the conveyance of the baggage now being elephants, they were left to follow us leisurely, while we made a long, rattling march to Amorah; and on our way, as we passed through a large village named Cuptāngung, it was noticed that a portion of it was fortified, in order to overawe the surrounding country, as well as to facilitate communication with our advanced posts.

In this village several officers of a native infantry regiment perished. Poor fellows! they were decoyed while endeavouring to escape the brutal Sepoys, and cruelly murdered. What the living men had suffered while being hunted down can never be known—except this: that exhausted, foot-sore, wounded, and bleeding, they were slain by the savage foe with demoniac barbarity, as we ascertained on the spot. I mention this cruel tragedy here, merely to show how distressed and distracted our unfortunate countrymen were in the Mutiny days. Not knowing what to do, or whither to fly—like ensnared birds awaiting their doom—but flying at length for their lives, they actually flew into the very jaws of death.

We did not loiter here, but were soon again jogging along through a dismal scene, from which all life and animation seemed almost wholly absent; and as we rode on, sometimes across enormous tracts of open country, sometimes in and out of gigantic *topes* and deserted villages, only a few gaping peasants, or the lowing of stray cattle relieved the dreary aspect and ominous stillness—deepened rather than broken by the monotonous tramp of our horses' hoofs.

But the severest toil, in whatever form, has an end, like everything else. And so this long, weary march ended at length at the village of Amorah; too late, however, after nightfall for us to do more than bivouac in open fields, and rest there on generous earth, with a star-lit, sympathising, cloudless sky above us all.

At Amorah we burst into the full blaze and storm of the rebellion, and found ourselves, after many months of unceasing marches, counter-marches, and flying marches, covering an extent of country which in length of mileage would have embraced European kingdoms, suddenly halted for unexplained reasons, and an unknown period.

Although our harassing marches now closed, the circumstance was a disappointment to the Corps, and considered by no means satisfactory; for having at last reached, to use a hackneyed phrase, within measurable distance of Luknow (where preparations for the re-capture of that important city were in progress), we all felt impatient for removal to those

more stirring quarters. Subsequent events, however, following as they did one after another in quick succession, amply justified the peremptory orders that detained us at Amorah. For to have left the position we now held, would undoubtedly have resulted in again abandoning the surrounding country to the rebels; for notwithstanding they had been attacked and driven out of the district, they were still in the neighbourhood, and the sullen booming of their morning, noon, and evening guns afforded the means of ascertaining the direction of their whereabouts—a few miles away at Belwa, and *tête-à-tête*, as it were, with ourselves.

Our position now, with its overpowering sense of loneliness, was not an enviable one; for here we were thrown out on the confines of Oudh, isolated and beyond the support of any force, menaced from Belwa in front by the usurper's insurgents, and from Nugger in rear by a body of mutineers, having to turn out daily for some real or threatened attack, watchworn and jaded with incessant duty, and the apparent impossibility of succour reaching us in time to overawe the rebels—who would have envied such a position? It was an anxious time; but there was no falling off in the confidence of the "B.Y.C."—to use the initials of the Corps' designation, as invariably used amongst ourselves. And so from day to day, with bull-dog pertinacity and clenched teeth, we held on to the position, and bore up against the perils that beset us; never thinking we could do so, but we never

know how much we can do or bear till we have done or borne it. All of us knew that every man in the Corps carried his life in his hand, that he was under the shadow of death, and that his safety, for some time at least, must depend upon his own vigilance and exertions; and the vigilance and exertions of patrols, pickets, sentries, and even of the camp followers never flagged for a moment. In fact, every man in the camp, whether sick or sorry, was permanently on "sentry go" day after day, and night after night.

This prominent allusion to so critical a state of affairs is, I assure you, reader, unalloyed with braggadocio, and the Government record (that is to say, the date of the Gazette), relating to the dangerous isolation of the Corps at this period, is inserted elsewhere in this narrative, and that document will show the forlorn and perilous position into which we had helplessly drifted—a position infested with mutineers, and where every native (the unfortunate peasantry having fled from their homes) was an enemy, or prepared to become such on the first symptoms of wavering on our part. In truth, the surrounding country was surging with revolt; treachery and death lurked on every side; and if we had shown any signs of retreat, or suffered ourselves to be forced from Amorah, the rebels would have been free to overrun the district once more, and carry fire and sword whithersoever they pleased.

Looking back over the whole course of our difficul-

ties, I conscientiously say—without any vain boasting—that nothing during the campaign, not even the desperate ordeals through which we subsequently passed, tried our dogged tenacity, and unflinching endurance, more than the unceasing duty at that perilous and important post.

CHAPTER VIII.

HAVING undertaken to faithfully trace this narrative exactly as it was recorded in the journal of my youth, I have accordingly now to transcribe a few pages of it in diary form, and as this diary records the passing events that actually occurred until we were succoured, its contents will, in some measure, tend to illustrate the perilous position held at this time by the Corps.

Amorah, February 23rd, 1858.—Early this morning some attention was paid to "comfort," and the tents were pitched in a manner quite novel to witness, and with a tidiness we had not yet seen.

The regimental guards are stationed in front of the encampment, and pickets with chains of videttes keep sharp eyes on the surrounding country.

The horses are picketed in four parallel lines of one troop each, and the baggage elephants occupy a patch of ground immediately in rear of the encampment.

The camp followers seeing these unusual precautions taken for the protection of the camp, and hearing the enemy's guns in the distance, begin to show signs of apprehension, so much so that in all probability, if in the darkness of night a hearty cheer was raised by

ourselves, few, or perhaps none, of them would be found by daylight to ridicule their fears.

No attempt made to annoy us.

24*th*.—Duty! duty! everlasting duty continues, and in consequence some grumbling may be excused until the arrival of the Field Force on its way to succour us.

25*th*.—Last night, without intermission, half the Corps patrolled to and fro in all directions, especially along the main road leading into Oudh—grim work! As rebel horsemen were hovering about, fifty sabres were kept in the saddle by day and by night, ready for any emergency.

26*th*.—This morning a strong patrol, while reconnoitring, intercepted a band of rebels, gave chase, overtook, encountered, and slew some of them; but owing to the difficult ground the rest escaped, except three who were captured, and on their arrival in the camp some sensation was caused when their arms and accoutrements proved them to be genuine Sepoys of the Bengal Army.

As no intelligence concerning the rebels at Belwa could be extracted from them, and to all our interrogatories they assumed a sullen silence, they were at once led away to be hanged; and then followed a scene that, thank God! never—except in such times as these—falls to the lot of Christians to witness. Nobody in the camp who saw that scene has forgotten it, I am sure, or ever will forget it. Within the boundary of the encampment a gibbet having been extemporised in a cluster of trees, the mutineers were ordered to

mount the elephant usually employed on such ghastly occasions ; this they did with alacrity, and their arms being unpinioned they helped to adjust the nooses in the cords round their own necks ; then the elephant by "command" of its keeper moved off, and left the trio suspended to the branches in dying agony, until death—by strangulation—relieved their sufferings.

In ordinary times such scenes would have chilled the blood of the living, but now men who had never perhaps in the whole course of their lives witnessed the execution of a human being were actually superintending, with a sort of superhuman calmness, the "surroundings" of a common hangman. Such, alas ! is the eventful epoch we live in, and in which there is no alternative.

27*th.*—Weather charming ; the air mild, the sky clear, and of the loveliest turquoise blue—Mars and Ceres appear in strange fellowship at Amorah. A boundless and rolling carpet of rich crops lies spread out before us on every side, but not a living form is seen lingering about the pleasant landscape. Heavy firing at intervals on the Oudh frontier. Every horse saddled ; every man accoutred and on the alert. Sent off a spy to the rebel camp at Belwa. He is, I am told, a desperate scoundrel; but as at the risk of his life he proved himself faithful to us on a former occasion, he was again allowed to venture into the enemy's lines.

As I sit conversing with a chum under the protruding outer fly of our tent, overlooking the main

road, one of the picket is seen galloping in at speed. We feel conscious of something unusual having occurred. He sweeps round to the Commandant's quarters, and now we hear the "assembly"; we fly to the horses.

28*th.*—The "alarm" was a true one. The picket, surprised by the approach of some rebels, called in the videttes, formed up, despatched a messenger to the camp, then charged and engaged the ruffians in a hand-to-hand encounter. But not yet had the notes of the trumpets ceased when the camp-picket of fifty sabres were let loose, and away they rushed "to the rescue," while the main body to a man stood with bridle in hand if need be in readiness to mount. The picket had, however, attacked with such vigour and effect that, before aid could reach our fellows, the rebels were routed, and thrown out in their calculations; for, armed with muskets and matchlocks, which commanded a longer range than our carbines and revolvers, they probably had calculated on driving in the outposts, with a view no doubt to ascertaining our strength. Thus warned, as it were, we passed the night fully accoutred and on the *qui vive.*

In yesterday's affair several of the picket were wounded, but poor Randolph was killed. His head was literally cloven in two by a sword cut, and over the shoulder there was a wound extending right down into the lungs. Early in the morning his remains, wrapped in a horse-cloth, were buried, while the perpetual booming of the enemy's guns in the distance,

formed an appropriate accompaniment to the short prayer read over his grave, by the Lieutenant of the troop to which he belonged.

Being the first volunteer killed in action, Randolph's name is recorded here; but no other casualty in the Corps will be mentioned in this narrative, for the melancholy list, alas! is too long, to warrant its insertion within the narrow space allotted to these pages. I may, however, mention that the numerous Government Gazettes of 1858, and 1859, contain the category of the killed and wounded.

March 1st.—Although the safety of our position is reduced to a calculation of hours, and our heads are in tigers' mouths, it was cheering to hear that the advance guard of the Field Force would be with us on the morrow. From the rebel camp the spy also brought intelligence of armed men flocking out of the Belwa fort, and preparing for a foraging raid over the district. And to this information he also supplemented other intimations concerning the movements of the rebels, which, as on a former occasion, proved so true that, instead of being a "desperate scoundrel"—as his fellow camp followers for some occult reason had dubbed him—he became the native hero in the camp; and when the fighting commenced in downright earnest, he was present in all the engagements, sticking to the Corps like a leech, until eventually the brave fellow, with broken sword in hand, was killed while endeavouring to save the life of a wounded trooper. Such was the fate of Mohun (a low-caste

shoemaker), than whom a more faithful, and courageous spy no European force ever had in India.

The purport of the message received from the Field Force was, of course, known only to those in command of the Corps, but immediately on its receipt we were warned to march as soon as there should be daylight enough, for obvious reasons, to discern objects at considerable distances. As to the camp, that was to be left standing under the protection of the approaching advance guard; while the camp followers were instructed to await the arrival of the whole Force before striking the tents, and with baggage, etc., following the road we were about to take.

When the morning brightened, we drew sabres and moved off into an unpleasant white mist that hung over our route, but it did not last long before the rising sun, and as it disappeared the features of the country towards which we were proceeding could be distinctly traced for miles in their forlorn solitude—even the very villages we passed were wholly deserted. But this dull, monotonous ride was suddenly enlivened on our reaching some undulating land in the environs of Belwa, and coming in view of its swarming insurgents. And here we had hardly halted, when round-shot ploughed across the fields and ricochetted over the slopes that protected us, while shells rushed and hissed like monsters of the air above our devoted heads—the heads only were visible from the fort, so that the instant the smoke of the cannon appeared in the embrasures, they bobbed approval as regularly and

simultaneously as if they had moved by machinery. The rebel sharpshooters, too, appeared active, for as we looked up at them we could see hundreds more venturesome than others sally out rifle in hand, advance some distance in front, and with long, sustained aim, fire. They were, however, indifferent marksmen, inasmuch as, with the exception of a few bullets whizzing harmlessly past our ears, all their shots fell short.

A bird's-eye glance having been cast over the fortress and its environs, amid savage yells mingled with foul execrations poured out upon us by the villains, we retraced our steps to Amorah; and about halfway between that village and the rebel stronghold just reconnoitred, we met our camp equipage and followers *en route* to join us. And this circumstance was exhilarating to all spirits; it was in fact, as it were, the "friendly precursor" of the Field Force, and indicated the arrival of succour within hailing distance at last· so that whatever might now follow, incidental to the recent passage-of-arms before the fort, we had its support, as well as our own good sabres to trust to.

A word here about Belwa may not be without some interest to the reader, though I sketch the features of the whole place merely in outline; for living as we were in the saddle, with graves always open at our feet, and grappling with a rebellion in which human blood was flowing like water, we were in no mood to notice in detail the general aspect of any place or scenery.

Belwa, then, is a village situated on the confines of

the Gorukpūr district, and overlooks the river Ghagrā, which flows between it and Ajudya, the ancient capital city of Oudh. The plains on which this village lies, and through which this boundary river passes, are remarkably fertile, but in rural features without any pretensions to landscape beauty. Across these plains runs the high road to Luknow, and to the right of them extensive fields stretch onwards until they vanish from sight near the banks of the Ghagrā on the one side, and likewise disappear in a vast circular sweep of vegetation on the other. In the background *topes* form a sort of amphitheatre on a colossal scale, and in front of all is the plateau on which the village of Belwa stands; while in a sandy dip adjoining this plateau its fort frowns over the surrounding country.

This village and fort, as well as other adjacent earthworks, were occupied by Nipal troops when we reached Amorah; but the day following our arrival, they suddenly evacuated the place, and started to rejoin their chief (Jung Bahadur), who was then with a Nipalese army on the march to Luknow. And to this extraordinary "move" must be attributed the harassing trouble and toil through which we struggled.

The insurgents were well aware of the importance of this formidable post, considerably increased by the difficult nature of the ground, possessing the command of the highway into Oudh, and having all the advantages of a concentric position; they were therefore not slow in seizing it immediately after the Nipalese had retired.

On the spot where we met our camp-equipage the Corps rested *en bivouac*, and was there presently joined by the Field Force. With the union, we enter upon a new stage in our eventful career, as the next chapter will show.

CHAPTER IX.

Our bivouac presented an animated, and rather a singular scene, by the appearance upon the stage of the troops destined to act a prominent part in the approaching struggles.

Groups of England's "hearts of oak," seated on the backs of horses harnessed to naval guns, here represented Jack Tar literally as the proverbial "Horse Marine." Knots of those splendid amphibious bulldogs, the Royal Marine Light Infantry, stood among us and related their recent experiences. There was a fine body of Sikhs—fierce, resolute-looking fellows, with an air of military dash about them. And not the least remarkable among this martial and motley assembly, with all its variety of mien and attitude, race and colour, was a very strong (numerically) regiment of Gūrkhas.

Although we are now to co-operate with a distinguished Field Force—which for the sake of brevity will in future be termed Brigade—with its proceedings this narrative will interfere as little as possible. It may, however, be noted here that its total number of all arms was some three thousand men, and of these only ourselves (two hundred and fifty) were cavalry.

In the memorable afternoon of March 2nd, 1858, the Brigade, under the command of Brigadier Rowcroft, set forward to capture the fort of Belwa by *coup de main*; and when we were once fairly on the line of march, the distance to that stronghold seemed as short as the hour in which it was accomplished.

Preparatory to the assault, the disposition of the force was made in a few minutes; and where the ground displayed any advantages for artillery, it was at once occupied. The infantry were drawn up in line, with their flanks covered by the cavalry; while at some distance in front of the village a strong body of Marines and Sikhs, partially protected by a *tope* from the fire of the rebel batteries, guarded the main road, and at the same time distracted the attention of the besieged.

The enemy during the day had not been idle; for since our reconnaissance in the morning, and anticipating an attack in consequence, he had strengthened himself by calling in to his aid other rebel troops from Oudh. Besides, as indications to the ranges of his guns, he had attached huge bundles of brambles to long bamboos and stuck them into the ground here, there, and everywhere, in front of the cannonading distance of his bastions.

By this time the fortifications were thronged with defenders, who began to pour forth a heavy though an ineffectual fire on our line; and this thundering cannonade was the signal for our guns and shell-rockets to open. Still, though shell and round-shot in rapid

succession continued to plough into the walls and curtains of the fort, no breach or any aperture could be discerned in it. But listen to the bugles ringing out the advance, and now see Jack Tar responding to their call by galloping up his guns to a murderous range; and then the bombardment commenced in right good earnest.

Meanwhile the Marines and Sikhs, pushing on in skirmishing order, trod down all opposition, gained the outskirts of the village, broke through the resistance offered there, and with a final rush drove out the insurgents at the point of the bayonet. Belwa was won, but not its fort. Though the bombardment continued with unabating fury, no serious impression could be made on the stronghold; and long after dusk, in the hellish glare that now and again burst out from the explosions of the infernal missiles hurled at and from the fort, the rebels were visible lining the ramparts in crowds. Secure within strong defences, and outnumbering the Brigade by at least five to one, they could well afford to display a daring tenacity worthy of the old days, when they so courageously fought on behalf of the East India Company.

Darkness frustrated further efforts; and it was as well that it did so, for it had been amply proved that the strength of the Brigade was altogether insufficient to effect its object. If an attempt had been made to capture the place by storm, a tremendous sacrifice of human life must have occurred; and if the attempt had ended in failure, the consequences would inevitably

have been most disastrous to this and the adjoining district of Azimghur. As it was we lost something of the prestige which at first surrounded us, by the ineffectual blow struck at the fort of Belwa.

The attack on the fort having terminated unsuccessfully, the conquered village was evacuated, and the Brigade retired in good order, and by moonlight fell back to the same bivouac, whence it had started in the afternoon with a view to capture the rebel stronghold.

Perceiving the favourable turn affairs had taken in his behalf, and emboldened by temporary success, the enemy did not remain inactive; for not many hours after we had bivouacked, detachments of his infantry were reported to be crossing the Ghagrā, and hurrying to Belwa.

There was, therefore, a sort of "council of war," in which good counsels prevailed, inasmuch as they decided our return to Amorah; and by resorting to this retrograde movement, it was suggested that the enemy would probably be encouraged to encounter the Brigade in the field, with the result no doubt of a terrible thrashing overtaking him; besides, it was hoped that in the open country the victory would be not only sure, but decisive, so decisive as to reassure the unfortunate peasantry, who had to a man fled the country.

As Amorah was destined to become the scene of more than one sanguinary action, and fated to obtain considerable celebrity, I will just remark in passing that it is a village very superior to those generally found in that part of the country; and the high

road that passed through it may be termed the key-route to the southern districts. In its front were boundless plains dotted with hamlets and fields. On its right a vast stretch of open country commanded the approaches in that direction; while on its left the land was as flat as a pancake, and continued so until at length it disappeared, as it were, to the eye in the distance, as far as the horizon. Such, in brief outline, was the nature of the surrounding country wherein the tents of the Brigade were pitched, and where we awaited the onset of the rebel hordes.

As regards the precautions that were deemed necessary for the protection of the camp, I need only mention that nothing seemed omitted for safeguarding it. Outposts were stationed, pickets outlying and inlying planted, patrolling squads formed; in a word, everything was done to render its critical position safe.

Nothing however occurred until early morn on March 5th, when, as the troops were busy looking to their arms and ammunition, for the eternal bellowing of the enemy's guns had put them considerably upon their mettle, tidings were brought that the rebels were advancing in great force. So that, after all, our retreat from Belwa resulted, as anticipated, in enticing the miscreants to venture an encounter with us in the field; and as they now approached, the Brigade moved out in readiness to welcome them, and formed up for action thus: the guns, well horsed and manned by the bold sons of Neptune (naval warriors of H.M.S.

Pearl), took ground in the centre; the infantry, forming strong columns, extended in line on each side of the guns; while the whole of the cavalry, divided into two squadrons, guarded both flanks of the Brigade.

On came the enemy, like swarms of locusts, the serried lines of gleaming bayonets bristling above an extensive belt of brushwood indicating the masses coming up in long succession, and forming behind the vegetation masking their advance. At this juncture any offensive demonstration was impracticable, for they had not yet emerged from under cover; but the suspense was soon cut short by a shell from the naval guns bursting in their midst, and stirring them up for action.

Their advance, by the notes of bugles, was covered by a sweeping fire from heavy artillery posted on the main road, and a withering discharge of musketry from the surrounding fields, in which the Sepoys swarmed by thousands. And what a strange spectacle it was, to be sure, to see these veteran troops now engaged in a deadly struggle against those with whom, in former days, they had fought side by side in many desperate wars!

In vain the gallant Jack Tars poured torrents of grape into their thronged ranks, before which they went down like ninepins; in spite of the Marines showering volley after volley into their advancing columns, and the Sikhs and Gūrkhas, shoulder to shoulder, bravely holding their ground, the rebels step

by step pressed on. Flushed with temporary success at Belwa, and backed by an immense numerical superiority in men and guns, they had recklessly imagined victory as easily gained in the open field, as with characteristic vanity they claimed one—in a fortress—from which we had prudently retired.

While every man of the Brigade was desperately engaged in beating down the overwhelming obstinacy experienced in front, and the fury of the action had extended to our flanks, alarm was raised that the rebels were outflanking us, and making for the camp. Then in that critical moment a desperate movement was resorted to, which happily resulted, it may be said, in turning the doubtful fortunes of the day.

The cavalry was ordered to pass forward, and charge a surging column of mutineers pushing on to support the centre of their line. Accordingly, the instant the word "charge" was given, the Yeomanry gave the spur to their horses, and encountered a deadly hand-to-hand struggle, which they terminated by annihilating the head of the column. So far, so good. But the immediate effect of this charge was electrical on the main body; for, hearing with surprise the din of the desperate mêlée, they hesitated in their advance, recoiled, then rallied, and in dense, disorderly masses pressed in towards their centre, while the "broken column," disorganised by the charge, likewise collapsed with confusion in the same direction. An opportunity thus occurred for attacking them to advantage, which was not permitted to escape. The

Brigadier seized on the moment, and charging with the whole force in line burst through everything that opposed him. Meanwhile the exterminating fire of the sailors paved the way for the infantry, as with levelled bayonets they rushed on to the guns. There the conflict raged fiercely, the cold steel doing its murderous work unrelentingly, as evidenced by the jags in our sabre-blades retaining pieces of bone, and blood-besmeared hair.

In thus dealing out this stern retribution, it must not be imagined that in revenge we were thirsting for blood. On the contrary, we were weary of shedding it, God knows. But the reader will bear in mind, that it was "war to the knife," and that if we had shown any mercy to these ferocious scoundrels, they would assuredly have shot us down the next moment. It was a matter of life or death, to kill or be killed; and if we had stayed our hand, we should undoubtedly have courted our own destruction.

At length, unable to sustain the combined assault of a force fighting like enraged tigers, the rebels yielded reluctantly, contesting each position as they abandoned it.

The action closed in the afternoon, and on the Brigade's return to the camp, a salute from the captured guns (nine with ammunition, tumbrels complete) proclaimed to the surrounding country the triumphant victory, which saved the district a second disastrous invasion. But, although victory after victory continued to follow our arms in succession, the above-

mentioned salute was our first, and last one during the campaign, for not a grain of powder could be spared subsequently.

And here I subjoin a short extract from Brigadier Rowcroft's despatch No. 168, and dated March 6th, 1858 (as published in the Government Gazettes), relating to the service rendered by the Corps in the above briefly described action.

"I saw there was no time to be lost, and that a rapid and decisive blow must be struck," writes the Brigadier in his official despatch. "I rode on to the cavalry, and ordered it to advance rapidly inclining to the right, and to charge the enemy's sowars * and infantry, hoping it would shake their centre. The result of this movement was soon apparent. I saw the left of the enemy hesitate, and the sowars in rapid retreat. Down came the Yeomanry at a charging pace, well and steadily together, on the moving masses of infantry, cutting down and killing great numbers, over a hundred reported. The whole left of the enemy soon gave way. I galloped up to the Yeomanry cavalry, and thanked them for their good, gallant movement and charge; and ordered them to move towards the left to threaten the enemy's centre. When ordering the Yeomanry to advance, I detached a party of troopers to the rear of the naval guns to cover and protect them; and this party, by their gallant and excellent service, aided in capturing some of the guns."

This extract speaks for itself, and I need not add a single word of comment.

A remorseless action of some eight hours' duration, deserves more recognition in descriptive detail, than a brief notice of it in the form of a mere epitome, such as that above recorded. But as I was only a volunteer

* Cavalry.

trooper, and not a war correspondent—who always sees more of the fighting than those engaged in it—I have written merely the facts and incidents that came under my own observation. Besides, during those long mortal hours of slaughter, the battle-field at intervals was so shrouded and wrapped up in its own smoke, that a detailed description of it was obviously impossible to note.

Before closing this chapter, however, I am tempted to remark—in no spirit of boasting, but as a mere record of fact—that after the above-recorded tough tussle (when we were deservedly thanked by the Brigadier on the field) the rebels were flattering enough to dub the Corps by the impolite name of Shitāne Pultun, which may be freely rendered in plain English as regiment of devils. And as this unique information was conveyed to us by our faithful spy Mohun, to whom I have already alluded in these pages, it was implicitly believed; and that "satanic appellation," needless to say, stuck to the Corps until the end of the campaign.

CHAPTER X.

LATE in the afternoon succeeding the victory, the European troops, formed into three sides of a hollow square under the peaceful azure sky, witnessed the burial of the killed. And the sad ceremony of the funeral service that was observed over the mortal remains of those fine fellows, who had but just fought and fallen by the side of those now looking on, must have touched every heart there, even were its nature at other times cold and hard as a stone. And doubtless there were many noble fellows of all ranks in that assemblage who, though ordinarily taking little heed of military obsequies, in this last duty due to the honourable slain, whispered a prayer to the gates of Heaven, on behalf of their fallen comrades in arms.

Amidst manifestations of general rejoicing, mingled with sorrow after the action, it was not forgotten that the camp was put in jeopardy by the rebels outflanking the Brigade. Had they boldly precipitated their attempt to capture it, the disastrous consequences would undoubtedly have been the annihilation of the feeble guard, the indiscriminate massacre of our sick and wounded, the helpless flight of the camp followers, the destruction of the magazine and commissariat

stores; while the Brigade itself, attacked simultaneously both in front and from the rear by an exasperated foe, would probably have had to retreat with calamitous loss.

To guard against the possibility of such a disaster happening, however, it was decided to encompass the camp with trenches, so as to render it somewhat secure; while for the protection of the hospital and magazine, the erection of earthworks, mounted with the captured guns, and made defensible against everything but regular siege operations, was deemed necessary to meet any emergency that might arise. Accordingly the work of entrenching and fortifying commenced, while all huts or houses that stood in the line of fire were levelled—the baggage elephants being employed in the latter task, instead of sappers, of whom there were none, and very serviceable they proved. Much spirit and steady labour having been thrown into the work, the position soon became defensible, and in consequence considerable saving in watchfulness temporarily followed.

The result of the victory paralysed the rebels; and was productive of so salutary an effect upon the inhabitants of the district that shoals of the peasantry, who in numbers form the most important part of the population, returned to their homes, from which they had fled at the commencement of hostilities. And as therefore a short interval of tranquillity has now to be recorded, I will slightly digress in the course of the narrative, in order to speak of these good and gentle

people (among whom it has been my lot to be thrown for years, and with whom I have often had to pass months consecutively, without seeing a white face, or speaking a word of my native tongue), as well as to show the attitude they assumed in the dreadful times of the Mutiny.

It is impossible for those who have not actually lived among the peasantry of Upper India, and who have not themselves had experience of their innate character and of their inner life, to be able fully to realise their amiability of disposition and inborn goodness of heart. They are a people so mild, so docile, so humane, so submissive in deportment, and withal so faithful, that their nature would recoil with horror at any act of cruelty or treachery. They are known to venerate even the very insects of the earth, and regard all animals as having been formed like themselves by the decree of God, whose life they have no more right to take away or to put it to corporal pain wantonly than that of a human being. Moreover, taking them all together, they possess a wonderful similarity of disposition in showing much sympathy and kindness, not alone towards each other when in trouble or distress, but even to perfect strangers. "Live and let live" is their undying maxim, and so rigidly do they adhere to the principle of this sympathetic fellow-feeling, that the most productive lands adjoining their villages are often gratuitously set apart as Bhiya-Chara, which, being interpreted, means provision for the poor Brotherhood. Where in the wide civilised

world, it may be asked, will one find more forethought, kindness of heart, and less personal selfishness than this? And yet, the phenomenal fact remains, that the Sepoys who committed the bloodthirsty massacres and murders, were actually recruited from among these very peasantry.

The limits which I have prescribed to myself in these fragmentary pages, prevent my going into a detail of circumstances to prove the above-stated startling fact in this place; but I shall have something to say on the subject, when I come to speak of the cause that led the Sepoys to commit such cruel and inhuman atrocities, as positively shocked and horrified their own rustic parents and brethren.

Whatever may have been their natural feelings of indignation raised by the perfidious cry of their caste being on the brink of destruction, these faithful peasantry remained steadfast in their allegiance to the Government that had brought them within the pale of civilisation. And through all the vicissitudes of the Mutiny—through all the horrors of that sanguinary epoch, their sympathies were with the *Sahibs* (European gentry). As a rule, they not only manifested the utmost repugnance to the cause of the rebellion, but fearlessly supported the authorities where they were able to resist the influence of the vortex in which vast numbers were engulfed, like thousands of the Sepoys; who were positively the victims of the revolt themselves. The sweets of the East India Company's rule —albeit with all its bitter faults—were not to them

untasted. They compared the humiliating oppression to which they were yoked, under a Mahomedan dynasty, and in some measure treated as beasts of burden, to the freedom they had enjoyed within the last century. Impartial justice and kind treatment had mitigated the evils of their former lot ; and these reminiscences, comparatively fresh in their minds, were not susceptible of being erased by any sudden change of circumstances that partially successful rebellion might temporarily have brought. Moreover, their traditional memorials indicated the degrading and hopeless bondage, so to speak, through which their forefathers had passed, and which was not likely to be forgotten by a people, whose ancestors were reduced through despotism to a position of abject serfs. Influenced, therefore, by such bitter reminiscences, they could not act otherwise than maintain a staunch adherence to the Government where they were strong, and continue virtually neutral where they were weak. They were, in fact, either passively, or actively, loyal.

No doubt the wealthy, high-caste Hindū could have stirred up, and led away into the raging flood tens of thousands of these rustic peasantry by the influence of his social position, religion, and caste ; but knowing as he well did that the Mahomedan was the Prime Agitator of the struggle for Empire, as well as at the bottom of the Mutiny, and comprehending to the full extent the ambitious character of that population, he firmly abstained from a share in the rebellion, lest, by the re-establishment of pitiless

despotism, he should be the greater loser in the end.

That many aggrieved Hindūs, and some of them, too, of exalted rank and great wealth, had just cause to deplore the cruel wrongs they had suffered through the "policy" of the East India Company, and in consequence took advantage of the Sepoy revolt by joining the mutineers, nobody denies—no more than that the local peasantry who so eagerly plunged into the rebellion, were those associated in some capacity or other with these wronged Hindū families.

As a mark of gratitude due, therefore, to the great bulk of the Hindū peasantry of Upper India—in which are included those of the Punjāb—I am glad to bear tribute to their faithful conduct, and have accordingly recorded their sincere loyalty in these pages. For, considering that the Mutiny developed the most formidable military revolt on record, and produced such a catastrophe as history has never known, had they cast in their lot with their Sepoy brethren, and made common cause with them in the revolt—even if only to the extent of cutting off all food supplies—what would have been the fate of India? I will leave those who were in the Empire during those disastrous days to answer so momentous a question, without venturing to proffer my own opinion on the subject.

* * * * *

Resuming the course of the narrative from the above digression, the approach of the "fiery dragon, the scorching ordeal," has to be recorded.

Time rolled on—the torrid season was coming fast, while rich crops ready for the sickle waved in the hot winds then setting in. By degrees the harvest was garnered, and the country shorn of its vegetation wore a dreary aspect. Its genial charm was gone; where bountiful fields had been, there were now bare flat plains. The atmosphere day by day increased to a fiercer heat, and the whole face of the visible earth dazzled the eye that looked upon it. The bracing cold weather, in fact, had been succeeded by the flaming furnace that blazes over Upper India during its "summer" months.

Without the slightest exaggeration, it may be safely said that no one who has not himself had personal experience of the open-air heat of the above-mentioned region, can form any conception of its intensity. In the compass of the heavens, without a cloud even as diminutive as a butterfly to screen his blinding rays, the sun appears from day to day, and for months, like an enormous ruby set in a burnished dome of brass, whence descends a fiery glow almost akin to that derivable from the focus of a burning-glass. There was no thermometer in the camp, but it required no meteorologist to pronounce what the temperature would have registered in the shade about noon; no less than from a hundred and thirty, to a hundred and forty degrees, we were sure. But all Englishmen stimulated by necessity, "the mother of invention," are not dilatory in discovering solutions for their difficulties—especially when they are abroad. So we

excavated the ground under our tents to a depth of several feet; and in these miserable "underground apartments," or rather living tombs, with reading and writing, cards and pipes, sentimental ditties and comic songs—which were, of course, always encored—to say nothing of spinning endless yarns and telling mirthful stories, we contrived to while away the weary and fiery hours, as pleasantly as rabbits are wont to do in their appropriate warrens. And it was in holes such as these, that I employed myself in writing the journal from which is transcribed this narrative, so far as it relates to our life and operations in the field.

While domiciled in these inhospitable burrows, we were sometimes molested by such unwelcome visitors as the deadly snake called the Karith—in search of, perhaps, a more agreeable temperature than that of above ground? Yet it seems strange, and it will hardly be believed, but it is nevertheless a fact, that the karith, like the cobra, is naturally partial to places where men live. And although this dangerous reptile is only half the size of a cobra, it is equally venomous. A sting from either is certain death in a few hours; and that being indisputably true, it is curious to note that the karith and cobra persistently haunt the dwellings of men, whilst the other numerous species of snakes far less poisonous—some indeed harmless—rarely approach human habitations at all. No wonder, then, that thousands and thousands of the rural population year after year die from the fatal bite of the

karith and cobra, from which recovery has never been known.

At this time, too, yet another fatal foe appeared in these subterranean ovens, in the form of small-pox, which broke out and spread through the camp. Although sickness is ever to be found in the footsteps of war, the frightful nature of this disease could not but be deplored as a terrible calamity by any force pent up, as we were, like worms under earth, and undergoing manifold trials almost beyond belief. What with the camp having become a lazaretto, for the very air we breathed must have been heavily laden with infection; what with the misery of existing in disease-tainted holes; the excruciating heat, the suffocating dust, the inconceivable swarms of flies; with fever, dysentery, gangrene sores, all simultaneously prevalent in the camp, the contagious disease was helped but too fatally in finding easy victims among us.

In the midst of these horrors and this gloomy state of things, it may be asked how we fared in respect to commissariat provisions. Well, to tell the truth, it was always sheer hunger that forced us to cram them down our throats. Meat particularly was seldom barely better than carrion itself, and sometimes indeed so uninviting to the appetite and eye that one could hardly look at it without holding one's nose—no facetiousness is here implied—and this, too, be it remembered by all who read this, in times when at any moment our mettle, energy, and biceps were liable to be tested against a desperate and bloodthirsty foe in

the field. Smokable tobacco was not procurable for its weight in gold; and as to wine or ale, no such luxury was now even dreamt of—execrable rum diluted with foul tepid water, was the vile and poisonous alcoholic beverage to which all were confined. I could dwell a great while upon the woful subject contained in this sombre paragraph, but I think I have said enough already, to represent the complicated distress and misery through which we had passed, and were passing during this dreadful time.

Dismal as this melancholy combination of circumstances had rendered our wretched existence, the news of the capture of Luknow threw a cheerful gleam of light over the gloom of despondency that pervaded the camp. Besides, by the fall of that turbulent city, the confidence of the people became so reassured that they voluntarily acted as spies on our behalf in the enemy's lines; while such was the alarm created by that event that, although the rebel force had lately been augmented, they seemed more reluctant than ever to venture beyond the precincts of their stronghold.

Meanwhile the vigilance, zeal, and devotedness of the Brigade never relaxed or flagged for an hour, and the same precautions for its protection as were observed when it first reached Amorah still continued.

It was during this anxious time of unceasing vigilance that the Corps had Death ever present by its side; for while scouring the surrounding country throughout the night and reconnoitring by moonlight, a close, well-directed volley from any of the deserted

villages that lay along the line of roads we patrolled, must inevitably have brought down the whole patrolling party, like a flock of birds as with a single shot. But familiarity with danger breeds contempt for it; though, at the same time, it was a matter for congratulation that the rebels preferred their comfortable sleep within the Belwa fort, to lurking in ambush out of it.

CHAPTER XI.

We come now to a memorable day—April 17th, 1858—on which the unbroken tranquillity of a brief interval, since our last encounter with the enemy, was disturbed by vigorous cannonading on the Oudh frontier.

Now experience—and experience tends to instruct, and ripen men more than time—had taught us a valuable lesson in the preliminary tactics of rebel warfare; for we had learned that whenever they really meant to attack us, they invariably commenced the prelude to their operations with as much arrogant noise as possible; and as spies had previously brought intelligence of fugitive mutineers from Luknow having fraternised with their friends at Belwa, the prospect of another struggle became evident, and the roar of the hostile thunder as it echoed over the placid plains was greeted cheerfully, and roused the Brigade for the deadly encounter that was coming.

All was now activity and preparation for thrashing the approaching rebel army; and as soon as the troops were under arms, and all things pronounced in order for action, the word was given to advance, and in two contiguous columns the Brigade moved out to the attack.

The rebels came on with all the confidence imparted by superior numerical strength, though their appearance was rather "picturesque" than military, insomuch that from right to left within eye-range they appeared arrayed in a variety of showy costumes, while moving about in their midst were elephants also gaudily caparisoned. The Sepoy portion of this host, however, retained what might be termed half of their original uniform—that is to say, they wore the regulation white jacket of their defunct regiments, while their nether garments were strictly native. Their horse artillery (formerly, of course, belonging to the East India Company, but now "annexed" to their own forces) also astonished us by displaying surprising facility of movement; and in spite of the rugged ground that intersected the flat country, they could be distinctly seen galloping at speed from position to position, and bringing their guns to bear upon our ranks with a precision equal to the celerity with which they limbered up and unlimbered, and which was unquestionably worthy of applause.

A general fusilade opened on both sides, and was immediately followed by a thundering cannonade. A sanguinary conflict now ensued, and men began to drop, few killed, many wounded. The clash of arms, the deafening roar of guns, the whizzing of shells and thousands of bullets, all evidenced the desperate onset and fight. But as by this time dense clouds of smoke and dust had enveloped the whole scene, it will, nay, it must, suffice (for, as already stated, I am relating

throughout this narrative only what I saw) to say that after repeated efforts to check the Brigade in its crushing advance, the rebels in despair commenced leisurely to retreat.

Presently, however, a gun opening in front of our right flank announced the proximity of another rebel force, and this incident seemed to reassure the retreating multitude, for they faced about, and made further efforts to stand; but in vain. Grapeshot swept them off once more as before; the front ranks broke, those behind recoiled, wild panic and disorderly rout ensued. With increased impetuosity the advance continued, until our line debouching from a *tope*, we saw in the distance a body of Sepoys vainly attempting to rally the vanquished fugitives; but terror-stricken the beaten and scattered host heeded them not, and away over the road and fields with active strides, they soon disappeared behind the surrounding woodlands.

In front of the position on which the Sepoys, under notice, had apparently decided to make a final stand, stretched an extensive plain, in the rear was the main road leading into Oudh, on the right the land declined to broad ravines of difficult access, and close by on the left, enfolded in the graceful arms of gigantic trees, reclined a pleasant-looking little village, bearing the soft and gentle name of Tilga—a spot in appearance so picturesque and peaceful, that it seemed unnaturally savage to associate its charming rural precincts with a ghastly and deadly struggle, such as the one that was just on the point of being witnessed.

From our point of view, this body of mutineers seemed so small that, notwithstanding they were supported by a grim eighteen-pounder gun, a squadron of the Corps was deemed sufficient to dislodge, if not literally to annihilate them. Accordingly one hundred and twenty-two sabres, with the Colonel at their head, prepared to charge. The words March, Trot, Gallop, in rapid succession, had scarcely passed the lips of the leader, when on dashed the Yeomanry like greyhounds slipped for the chase. They sweep over the plain, they plunge into an intercepting ravine half full of water that momentarily checks their race into the jaws of death, they tear through the stream in the teeth of a shower of grape from the eighteen-pounder. Still on flew the squadron, with every nerve braced, every sabre gripped; knee to knee the onrushing wave of steel roared, as it were, "Now for the gun! Now for the gun!" as the scowling black monster from its gaping muzzle vomits for the last time another discharge of deadly grape into our faces; but with free rein, neck and neck, and outstretched strides the maddened and gallant horses fly, like the irresistible shower of the iron hail that had just flown over their heads. Yet the mutineers, with muskets levelled from the shoulder, stand like posts, and draw not a trigger—a few strides more and bayonet and sabre would have crossed each other—when lo! in an instant up sprang hundreds of Sepoys on every side as if out of the very ground itself. They had been crouching, in fact, like tigers prepared to spring from

behind the village, and the thin line of their front ranks by which we were decoyed. It was now too late to check the headlong rush, and had it been attempted, in the confusion that doubtless would have followed, the destruction of the whole squadron would probably have been the result. No sooner therefore were these numerous assailants disclosed than the Colonel thundered forth, Charge! And the next moment a stream of musketry, like a sheet of fire, met us with terrible effect, and literally cut down a section of the squadron, and encumbered the spot where this withering volley was received, with men and horses struggling in dying agony.

But nothing could daunt the remnant of that devoted band, and seeing their comrades fall, with wild enthusiasm and sabres flashing in the blazing sunshine, they plunged in among the enemy with an ardour that could not be resisted; and then followed a scene which to this day has not faded from the memories of those who saw it—a scene of dare-devil enterprise, which my feeble pen would fail to describe with adequate force, and tragical effect.

In an area of Heaven knows how many square yards, the killed and wounded lay crowded together as they had fallen; while some of the latter, having been blown off their horses when within a few yards of the muskets, with their "garments"—yes, reader, garments (for many of us, in contempt for dress, were fighting in shirt sleeves)—on fire, were unable to move; others fell and died without a groan; others, weltering

in their blood, or bleeding to death, dragged themselves up into sitting postures, and with revolvers in hand watched the doubtful fight; and others again, having escaped severe injuries and lost their horses, were standing over their helpless comrades, and shooting down the scattered Sepoys as they approached within revolver range of that gory spot. Indeed, in the tumult and hurry that prevailed, the black legs of these red-handed desperadoes were trampling over the bodies of our fallen as they rushed onwards to rejoin their main body, from which they had been cut off by the violent shock of the charge.

While all this was going on, the undaunted remnant —roused to almost superhuman efforts—having ridden into and over the mutineers, drew their revolvers, and an unrelenting and indiscriminate carnage ensued. And now the left squadron, noticing their comrades hard pressed, also raced into the mêlée; and then the clanking of steel, the rattling of musketry, the yells of the mutineers—which might possibly have been heard a mile off—supplemented by a wild chaos of sabres, bayonets, revolvers, and muskets, all mingled in a desperate hand-to-hand encounter. No quarter was sought, nor offered. In fact, these blood-stained ferocious demons had apparently determined to fight out their cause (?) or die in the attempt; and so fierce was their resistance that all the gunners to a man were killed and cut to pieces, fighting in defence of their gun, while the general slaughter was "whole-

sale"; and it was only when a cannon-ball, like a friendly messenger from the approaching Brigade, suddenly hummed over our heads, that these desperadoes were startled into a retreat, and flinging themselves into the adjoining ravines, they soon disappeared in and among the deserted villages beyond.

This brilliant and bloody encounter marks, in the reddest of letters, a page in the annals of Volunteering. And I could transcribe from my memoranda a few notes on the heroic deeds that were done by many of my comrades during that desperate day; but those deeds need no comment here now, and are hallowed by my silence. This encounter also having terminated the struggle of the day, I once more *for all* quote from Brigadier Rowcroft's gazetted despatch (No. 241, dated April 19th, 1858), wherein the following paragraph is recorded, which speaks for itself:—

"I ordered Colonel Richardson, in command of the right squadron Bengal Yeomanry Cavalry, to move from my right flank, and charge this body of the enemy. The squadron, under its gallant leader, made a noble home charge; and though they came upon a larger body of the enemy behind a village, and the Sepoys made desperate resistance, nothing stopped this brave Cavalry, and they cut down and killed great numbers, and captured an eighteen-pounder gun with limber; and the enemy were completely dispersed."

CHAPTER XII.

I NEED not dwell upon the harrowing scene—the like of which God grant I may never witness again—in the hospital tent after the return of the Brigade to the camp; for the horrors of war and its attendant misery are bad enough to those before whom they are laid bare, without being revealed to those happily unacquainted with them. But so much of the scene may be noticed here, as relates to the native sympathy shown to us on this memorable occasion.

Our servants, and most of them were Mahomedans, wept and sobbed bitterly at beholding the distressing sight of human blood and suffering in the hospital tent; and as they diligently attended to the wounded, there was a marked sadness in the countenances of them all; whilst some of them, too, assisted in carrying to the graves the mortal remains of those who had fallen. So that, whatever may be thought of Mahomedan tenets as being fanatically prejudicial to Christians, here in the field, at all events, their genuine sympathy on our behalf showed that, after all, notwithstanding their fanatical instincts, Mahomedans, especially in humble grades, are always disposed to show kindness,

and good fellowship towards all those who treat them with conciliatory forbearance.

After the action, the inhabitants of the neighbourhood evinced their joy at the complete discomfiture of the rebels by bringing in several wounded Sepoys, who had crawled away unperceived to some shelter close to Tilga, where they had received their final *coup de grace*. Of course they were summarily hanged on the nearest trees at hand, and with as little ceremony as one would use in slaying venomous reptiles. But, as I have long since thrown a veil over all such repulsive executions, I shall pass on, and not again allude to them.

In marked contrast, however, to these scenes too dreadful to forget, was witnessed on the same day a very impressive and affecting scene, when our poor fallen fellow-volunteers were buried. Among them my chum, boon companion, and unchangeable friend in weal or woe, poor T——, killed while side by side in the taking of the gun. Yes, there the young, handsome, chivalrous fellow—a dandy in Calcutta—now lay in that forlorn, out-of-the-way place, without as much as a blade of grass to mark the mournful spot. And as with heavy hearts we stood over those rough and shallow graves, and with moistened eyes gazed on the sad interments, our souls sickened at seeing the remains of our comrades, who but only a few hours before were full of life and chivalry, now being shovelled away into earthen holes like dogs. "Surely, God never created us for such a fate as this," was a remark

more than once groaned aloud by the side of those premature and sorrowful graves. And although thirty-five long years have flown away on the wings of Time since those eventful days, and my hair is grey, in my mind's eye I have not finished gazing upon that mournful scene of sorrow.

It was satisfactory to find, by the arms and accoutrements of the enemy left on the field, that we had been punishing the fiends of several mutinous regiments; and as to the weapons of the Auxiliaries, no notice was taken of them, except that they were collected in loads and destroyed, together with the muskets of the Sepoys.

Not once since the commencement of hostilities in this part of the country had the rebels received such a drubbing. They had been driven back on all sides, and routed without a prospect of being rallied; while their casualties in killed and wounded were enormous. Still, they kept up the "game of brag" by increasing their defiant salutes more than ever!

Campaigning affairs, like all human affairs, are in continual rotation; and this truism was here again verified by a swarm of rebels whirling round once more to a town named Tanda, and establishing chains of "military posts" there, as connecting links with the insurgents at Belwa.

With Oudh in a revolutionary blaze; Azimghur, the adjoining district, invaded by Kuer Singh's rebel army; and Gorukpūr itself, offering comparatively a safe and central asylum, fast filling with marauding bands of

insurgents, things began again to assume a threatening aspect. Reinforcements were urgently applied for, but none could be sent—not a man could be spared, while all European soldiers were required where *they were*. So that, in the very teeth of at least twenty thousand infuriated and exultant rebels, it was tolerably evident that the Brigade was expected to fight on, and hold on, where *it was*. And thus, it really seemed as if we had volunteered for a forlorn hope.

No doubt the Brigade would have continued to hold the position with the same indomitable resolution, and untiring energy as it had already repeatedly displayed in its defence, had not serious and unforeseen events now demanded its attention in another quarter. But I am anticipating, for the climax in the approaching hostile complications has not yet arrived.

By-and-bye rumours of night attacks began to pervade the camp, and in consequence the various guards were doubled during the dark hours, while the rest of the Brigade lay under arms, asleep with one eye open, until the sun was fully risen.

Bad tidings were also received from the rear, where a strongly fortified village, named Nugger, was threatened by a body of mutineers and their followers. Incendiaries, too, were active and busy; for hardly a night passed without some lurid conflagration lighting up the country, or villages blazing with such brilliancy that, had the rebels carried into effect their threats of hazarding nocturnal attacks on the camp, we should have welcomed them in the midst of these illumina-

tions, which enabled us to see almost as clearly as by daylight. The land, in fact, was brimful of blood and fire; and had a stranger suddenly dropped down upon us from the skies, his first idea on the prevailing state of affairs would certainly have been that he had descended into the infernal regions.

Thus passed the turbulent interval between April 24th and 30th, with fire and thunder indicating signs of the coming storm. Clouds of horsemen, too, had been seen hovering about in the distance; while an incessant roar of heavy guns set in with the shadows of eventide, and continued with little intermission throughout that restless night, passed in harassing watchfulness.

It was obviously certain that the morrow, when it came in, would be accompanied with the warm work brewing; and now that the usual forerunner of the rebel tactics was once more astir, with nerves well strung we awaited another struggle.

And shortly after dawn, while the troops were hastily swallowing their breakfasts, the bugles, instead of the reveille, sounded the "assembly," and on our turning out instantly, we beheld the enemy coming down in three strong columns, with swarms of skirmishers moving in his front; and with such precipitation was his onset hurled at our position, that the Brigade was fighting at first actually to save its camp, into which round-shot ricochetted in rapid succession.

So formidable an attempt by a numerous and exultant enemy to overwhelm the Brigade, as it were, at

the very outset of the action, thoroughly roused into headlong energy every man in our force; with the result that the camp was soon secure; and then the fighting from sunrise to sundown became general, and almost outlived that desperate day. To detail how the action was fought out to the end, how the missiles of war hailed around, how the sailors brought their guns to bear upon the crowded ranks of the rebels, how the infantry dauntlessly advanced, and the Yeomanry charged, would be to repeat an "oft-told tale," which in its reiteration could not fail to become wearisome, if not monotonous to a degree. I will therefore cut a long conflict short by stating that, on this occasion, we were successful in vanquishing the rebel army, only because we fought them in the united grasp of our concentrated force. Union was strength; and we presented a united front to the enemy. We were numerically too weak to cope with more than one column at a time; so that, throughout the whole of that terrific day, a desultory seesaw fight went on. When one column receded, another came on, and then another, and *vice versâ*, until at length, as the sun sank beneath the western horizon, the enemy retreated, leaving a considerable number of his dead behind, and the Brigade the triumphant master of the field.

As a set-off to the victory, however, spies arrived in the camp almost at the same time as our triumphal entrance into it, with the astounding news that the station of Gorukpūr was again threatened with invasion from the direction of Azimghur; that a skirmish

with freebooters had taken place at a police post near the town of Buste; that the village of Cuptāngung had been burnt to the ground; that Nugger having been occupied by insurgents, they were flocking into its fortress; and that the whole country lying between the ferry at Gyghāt on the river Ghagrā and the main road in the rear was blocked.

Then came the usual and oft-repeated question. What was best to be done? And after some discussion a sagacious decision prevailed.

It was urged that the present position of the Brigade was rendered useless by the enemy being in its rear, and pointed out that to hold it now would be to encourage him to break away, and overrun with impunity the neighbouring districts, which lay open without a bayonet to check his inroads and anarchy.

An immediate march, therefore, to the disturbed neighbourhood became unavoidable. And so, in a few hours after the above-recorded action, the camp was struck, the baggage packed, the earthwork levelled, and at midnight the terrific roar of the captured guns, as they were burst, appropriately served to convey a temporary farewell to Amorah, and an ominous growl to the foe in the rear.

CHAPTER XIII.

SOMETHING like a guerilla warfare having set in, with insurgents threatening our flanks, the baggage, etc., was directed to move between the tail of the Brigade and head of a strong body of all arms. But this precaution, however necessary, was the means of converting the march into a crawling, melancholy procession, resembling one following a funeral; and so tediously slow was our progress that the camp followers, in their impatience to outstrip an imaginary enemy, from whom no doubt they conjectured we were bolting, could not be restrained within the line allotted to them. Little therefore was our surprise when we heard that some grooms, who headed the Brigade by a few hundred yards, had been pounced upon by a band of marauders, and deprived of the valuable chargers they were leading.

It now became imperatively necessary to act, if possible, with greater vigour than heretofore, in order to summarily stamp out the seditious flame which had not yet ceased to burn, but, on the contrary, seemed rekindling again in this part of the country. Cuptāngung, therefore, was no sooner reached than the Brigade, indifferent to the fatigue it had already under-

gone during the long night march, pushed on to the Nugger fortress, which being but a short distance off, we commenced to assault at daybreak.

Without much ado, our howitzers and rocket-battery were at once brought into position, and opened, as usual, with magnificent effect. Indeed, the splendid practice of the sailors with their guns on all occasions, was one of the admirable features in the scenes of our field operations, and nothing tended more to animate the fighting, than the grand spectacle exhibited in the unerring flight of their destructive missiles darting through space, like falcons descending on their prey.

While the guns fed death in the fortress, the infantry advanced against the outer fortifications, and soon became warmly engaged, but the resistance there, though obstinate, was quickly brushed aside; and then the bayonet cleared the place, excepting where the mutineers stood firm and perished; while those who fled, fell fighting to the death beneath the sabres and revolvers of the Yeomanry.

In the midst of the ruins and bodies with which the fortress was filled, loot of the most miscellaneous description was found. There were ponies, bullocks, cows, goats, sheep (all "taken in" probably for the sake of protection, though several had been killed and wounded). Then there were arms of all sorts, drums, pipes, cooking utensils, and what not? In using the interrogative, I abbreviate the long heterogeneous category of the spoil; but I must not omit to add to it the chargers which the rebels had but just

captured from our grooms, and their recapture by us was considered far more important and satisfactory than the seizure and value of all the other booty put together.

An example in energy so effectual, and in execution so severe, gave confidence to the distracted peasantry, and exacted submission from certain turbulent villages in the neighbourhood.

The rebels at Belwa, too, who at our sudden departure from Amorah exulted in the belief that we had, metaphorically speaking, hoisted the white flag and taken to our heels, when they heard of the victory, were reported to be impressed with an idea that our retrograde movement, though ostensibly undertaken to reduce Nugger, was in reality a trick or stratagem, by which the Brigade hoped to draw them farther out into the open country, and thus lure them to their destruction.

Nugger having fallen, the Brigade was in a position either to remain where it now rested, or return to its former post at Amorah. But Cuptāngung, offering as it did a wider range for field operations, and overlooking a greater expanse of the country, being rightly considered a more strategical locality, we halted there *sine die* ; and again, by digging holes in the ground, we sought shelter in them from our "fiery foe"; and in the harassing routine of the camp duties, such as those to which I have already briefly alluded, the broiling month of May wore away.

During May the enemy received some vague rumours

of an enormous force moving down from Oudh, and in consequence whole regiments of rebels, both horse and foot, were reported by spies to be hurrying northward with much alacrity and consternation. And by-and-bye these rumours proved so far correct, that a swarm of Gūrkhas, returning to their homes in Nipal, passed by our encampment laden with the spoils of Luknow, and exultant in the "exploits" they had there achieved! And yet, forsooth, of what real assistance were these Gūrkhas in their confederacy with us after all? No European who had an opportunity of seeing them before the enemy in the field could applaud their prowess; while the natives of Upper India regarded their interference in the war as a proof of weakness on our part, and, in consequence, the Government temporarily lost considerable prestige in those districts through which this superfluous Gūrkha army sauntered homeward to Nipal.

While these Gūrkhas were passing on, a lull in hostilities temporarily followed; but it was not allowed to continue for any length of time. For now Banse, a large and loyal town on the border of Oudh, was invaded by hordes of rebels; and as it was ascertained that they had resolved to advance farther into the district, the Brigade at once marched to Banse; while the perpetual and familiar booming of the enemy's guns marked irregularly the cadence in a long, fatiguing tramp, through a line of country overshadowed with the gloom of a night so black, that our eyes could not pierce its density beyond our horses' ears.

We crawled along—marching it could not be called —in a darkness that could almost be felt; and oft and anon, in the dead silence that prevailed in our ranks, an irritable mutter was all that could be heard. Now, without troubling to inquire what this "irritable mutter" suggested, there can be no doubt that some irritation in the Corps would seem natural enough, when it is remembered that for months and months we had been undergoing no ordinary torture from burning heat, and eking out an existence similar to that in which vermin, and reptiles are wont to thrive. And yet, although the neck of the rebellion had been dislocated by the fall of Luknow, our interminable troubles seemed still as dark as the night through which we were journeying.

To say that during this expedition we resembled half-starved brigands, is to suggest our appearance while living as best we could on the wing, like swallows, and on such food as astonished our stomachs. And as to our gallant and generous horses, poor brutes! they sobbed and hung their heads, and in their worn and wasted frames, they looked wretchedly gaunt, and as if on their "last legs" from the toil and torture of their daily life.

However, onwards to the "Devils" was the cry; so following our noses, and groping our way along the black and lonely road, we crawled slowly on and on, as savage and irritable as the present state of affairs had rendered us.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE descent upon Banse was effected—to use a vulgar phrase—by a dodge in our route, which, although edging on, as it were, towards that town, seemed to lead away from it, as well as from our actual destination. No doubt this "dodge" was meant to draw the rebels off the scent; but they were not fools, and proved themselves, in not being caught napping, quite as wideawake as ourselves.

As we approached Banse dawn was breaking, heralded by the blush of the morning star visible on the horizon, and giving sufficient light to enable the outline of the town to be traced by our sleepy eyes; and as we scanned the place through the grey atmospheric film of early morn, no indications to show that the rebels had possession of it could be discerned anywhere. Presently, however, villagers appeared upon the scene, and enlightened us with news to the effect that the insurgents had abandoned the neighbourhood only but a few hours ago, and that Banse was quite deserted; and so on entering we found it. Not an inhabitant had tarried in the ill-fated town to witness its general wreck. All had fled, taking such goods and chattels as they could in the hurry of flight

conveniently carry away with them, and leaving the remainder to the tender mercies of any one.

By this precipitate retreat of the rebels from Banse, it was consoling to anticipate another encounter with them in the open field, and also satisfactory to find the inhabitants restored to their homes, without their having suffered from our guns.

The population of this town was said to be well-affected to the Government, and from the fact of their having been instrumental in saving some unfortunate European refugees from being massacred, it was but fair to acknowledge them as good and loyal subjects. Besides, on the present occasion, further proof in support of their genuine loyalty was shown by their returning to the town shortly after we had entered it, and supplying us with such refreshments as they themselves possessed, or could obtain from their neighbours.

One man particularly was indefatigable in his attentions to the members of our picket posted in the suburbs of the town ; and so marked was his hospitality that we were naturally led to show him some civility in return. By-and-bye this man, finding that we were not quite so closely allied to his Satanic Majesty as the rebels thought us, became exceedingly communicative, and related many adventures that had befallen him; but nothing interested us so much as his story connected with a subject applicable to the events now under notice, and therefore I allow it to appear in these pages.

Sunker Tewāre (that was his name), though seemingly a man over sixty years of age, and with a frame enfeebled from inability to sustain manual labour, still retained that dignified demeanour characteristic of the high-caste Rājpūt soldier.

Sitting in the midst of us he said, in a voice broken by emotion—by genuine emotion: "I was formerly a Sepoy in the Bengal Army, but wounds and frost-bites having incapacitated me for military service since the Afghan War in 1840, I am a pensioner of that army. I deplore the deeds of blood by which India has been polluted." And here finishing this prefatory flourish, he related to us so voluminous a narrative concerning the origin of the Mutiny, that I have not the space within the limits allotted to these brief chapters to more than summarily compress into a small compass a true translation of it; and I would ask the reader to bear in mind, as he peruses the story, that it is from the mouth of a *bonâ-fide* Sepoy, who, had he been in the ranks of the Bengal Army during the days of the Mutiny, himself would have become—by his own showing—a mutineer, like his brethren at that moment in arms against us.

The history of the Indian Mutiny in all its phases, and from every point of view, has been written until a host of uninformed people imagine the subject to be completely worn out, and well-nigh threadbare. But is it so? In reply I venture to say the subject is almost as inexhaustible to-day, as it was upwards of thirty years ago; and so it will continue, until every

man who passed through that memorable epoch shall himself have passed away from the world. For there are thousands (Europeans and natives combined) still living who have a separate experience of their own to relate, and whose reminiscences would shed new light on yet untold incidents, or rather tragedies, of those eventful days. I need hardly add that I allude only to those men—like ourselves—upon whom the thunderbolt of the Mutiny fell, and not to those who subsequently aided in its suppression.

In fact, the stage on which that tragical catastrophe occurred was so vast in extent, and the actors on it so prodigious in numbers, that even at this distance of time numberless episodes of the Mutiny—all more or less laden with agonising sorrow—are unknown, and, alas! many never will be known; for hundreds of our unfortunate countrymen, who could have described harrowing and heart-rending scenes, perished; and their sad fate is understood only so far that to this day their unburied bones are strewn in remote jungles, or lie bleaching on many of the forlorn plains of Upper India.

And in corroboration of these cursory remarks, Sunker Tewāre's story would probably have passed into oblivion, had not we met him through the merest chance. As he told it, so I now proceed to tell it, although clothed in my own matter-of-fact words, as embodied in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XV.

OUDH—lying about the centre of the great sub-Himalaya valley, and watered by such magnificent rivers as the Ganges and Ghagrā, as well as by many smaller though navigable streams—was regarded by the Brahmanical tribes, from time immemorial, as the granary and garden of Hindūstān.

The extraordinary fertility of its soil; its vast pastoral and agricultural resources; its beautiful rural districts; its majestic forests; its handsome capital city (Luknow ranked next to the imperial city of Delhi); its splendid temples; its great traditions, like those appertaining to Bhinswārā; its ancient memorials, like Ajudya, the birthplace of the far-famed Rāma, whose name is the Hindū's Bond of Brotherhood over the whole of Hindūstān; its grand martial race of men, like the Bhinswārā Rājpūts—all combined to make its proud and warlike people reverence the region as a "paradise," in which lay their homes, and the heritage of their offspring.

Notwithstanding, therefore, all that was urged to the contrary by interested "outsiders," the annexation of Oudh took its population by surprise; and from the hour in which this superb kingdom unjustifiably passed

into the possession of the East India Company, it awoke from the slumber of ages, and became a mine of sedition, only requiring time to burst into flames of a sanguinary revolution, and from that day onwards its aroused Hindūs and Mahomedans abided an opportunity to rise up against, and drive out the white interloper.

That this feeling rankled in the hearts of the people was manifested by the tumult caused in Oudh by a patriotic Mahomedan, named Fuzul Ali, who attempted to bring on an insurrection some six months before the Sepoy Army rose in mutiny. And mark—yes, mark, reader—these very same Sepoys were the men who hunted down this insurgent leader, and brought him to the gallows.

By the summary termination of Fuzul Ali's abortive attempt at revolution, the insurrectionary movement temporarily subsided—not, however, for want of sympathy with its cause, but because it was premature; the agitation being merely a convulsive start of the active volcano, which subsequently burst out so fiercely and blazed so high. This agitation, however, would unquestionably have vanished, as soon as the people became reconciled to the novel state of things under the *new* Government; but before the wounds caused by the seizure of their beloved country had healed, a *new* cartridge, from a concurrence of phenomenal circumstances, was "introduced" to the Bengal Sepoys; while, at the same time, this very cartridge actually became an irresistible weapon in the hands

of the discontented and designing Mahomedans of Oudh, who at once discovered in it an instrument to aid them in striking a blow for regaining the kingdom, and they hoped to succeed in the attempt by working through its powerful influence on the caste superstitions of the native army.

From their compatriots, of course, they naturally anticipated unanimous support; for they were aware that the whole population was exasperated by the annexation, and smarting in common with themselves under a cruel injustice, perpetrated in the peremptory confiscation of their cherished ancestral lands—lands of their birth, and to their notions steeped in honey, and superior to all others in the world. Accordingly no time was lost in setting a gigantic conspiracy actively on foot.

In the infernal plot that was to create and ripen disloyal combination among the Sepoys, and produce the awful tragedies at which the civilised world stood aghast, Oudh, primarily, should be represented, figuratively speaking, as a charged mine, ready for explosion, and the greased cartridge, secondarily, as a lighted match in the hands of the Sepoy Army—a match which, at the appointed time, was so effectually applied that, while it blew up the mine and shattered Oudh to atoms, it also convulsed the whole of Upper India, and shook the very foundations of the Empire itself.

Shortly, therefore, after the appearance of the greased cartridge upon the tragical stage, and not many months

after the annexation, emissaries went out from Oudh into the North-West Provinces, and surreptitiously predicted that an appalling calamity was close at hand: that an unclean cartridge, greased with swine's and cow's fat, had been distributed among the Sepoys with the object of converting them to Christianity; and that before long the whole population would be forced—if need be, at the point of the bayonet—to follow the example of their brethren-in-arms, as a matter of course! What wonder, then, that this atrocious "prophecy," so to call it, had the effect of spreading alarm, like wildfire, throughout Upper India; and that consequently, in their credulity, thousands and tens of thousands of ignorant victims became thoroughly imbued with hatred to the Government! Indeed, within the memory of that phenomenal and venerable authority, the "oldest inhabitant," never were the natives of the North-West Provinces in so great a paroxysm of fear; and this fear, in an intensified form, ultimately extended to the Sepoys themselves, with the terrible results known to the civilised world. By way, too, of giving plausibility to the "prophecy," and for purposes as obvious as they were mischievous, unleavened cakes (chupaties), alleged to have been made by Christians, were sedulously circulated among the Hindū villages throughout Upper India. Naturally, therefore, this infamous treachery, preying as it did in a direct manner upon the caste bigotry or fanaticism of a superstitious people, also created a profound impression in their minds. Con-

fidence in the Government was gone, while distrust and apprehension took its place instead. And the numerous tribes, according to their several characters, were influenced by seditious excitement, or paralysed by their belief in the awful doom with which they were threatened!

But even at this critical juncture of affairs nothing could have severed the Sepoys from their allegiance to the Government—that is to say, in their own phraseology, they were "true to their salt"; and with Hindūs, this expression implies irrevocable and unswerving fidelity to duty on behalf of those whom they may be serving. And yet, when the Mutiny burst out like a sudden conflagration, and startled India, one of the most popular beliefs about it, and one which has been fostered by many writers, was that it had been brewing and in a state of fermentation for years, and that it was an organised and premeditated rebellion; whereas the revelation of the following facts opposes this fallacious theory, and renders it not only visionary, but stamps the revolt in its suddenness as unpremeditated, and in its alleged "organisation" as the strangest that ever took place. For when a whole army—composed of sappers, artillery, cavalry, and infantry—divides, and subdivides itself, and flocks in thousands, some to Delhi, some to Luknow, some to caste leaders or territorial chiefs, and some again to their peaceful rural homes, where, it may be asked, is the "organisation," or premeditation discernible in this veritable phenomenal move-

ment, which actually occurred? Besides, had the revolt been premeditated, or in a state of incubation, so to speak, would it not have been hatched a year or so earlier, when England was engaged in a stupendous struggle with Russia, and when in consequence India itself had been denuded of European troops for service in the Crimea—to say nothing of the war with Persia, which had just been brought to a successful conclusion, and English regiments were returning thence to India? Then, again, where were the good and faithful domestic servants, of whom hundreds were related by kindred ties to the Sepoys themselves? Would not they have heard some allusions to, or whispers of, the approaching evil days, and sounded warnings of the coming disasters?—disasters under which they themselves reeled, and were struck dumb, while at the risk of their own lives saving those of many Europeans.

It must be borne in mind that I am recording Sunker Tewāre's sentiments in saying, that if ever an army mutinied without premeditation, that army belonged to Bengal; and how far the Mutiny was unpremeditated, I will endeavour to substantiate in another page further on.

Moreover, it must ever be remembered to the credit of these very same Sepoys that, only a few months before they rose in mutiny, they were actually hunting down to the death, or bringing to the scaffold so-called "rebels," or by whatever name one may designate men whose patriotism forced them to resist an unwarrantable confiscation of their homes in Oudh.

Perhaps, therefore, it will not surprise the reader to be told that Sunker Tewāre stated, as a solemn matter of fact, that the Sepoys, taking them all together, were never disloyal until, suddenly seized by a superstitious panic, and in consequence becoming literally mad, they rushed headlong, like a crowd of frenzied demons, into an ever-lamentable rebellion—into which he, too, would have been dragged, in spite of himself, by caste fanaticism, had he been, as he affirmed, serving with, instead of a pensioner of, the army.

While the plot thickened, and Upper India simmered with treason, and the echo of the panic, which had broken out among the Sepoys, re-echoed in all the military cantonments of the Bengal Presidency, the infernal conspiracy, in which they were to act the part of the principal tragedians, had accomplished its designs so successfully that by this time their distracted minds could think of nothing else—of nothing else but of their castes hovering, as it were, on the very brink of eternal perdition! And who can gainsay the fact that the high-caste Hindū of the Bengal Army of those days held his caste more sacred than anything on earth, and not only adored and idolised it, but would rather have died than lost it? Indeed, it is quite within the truth to say that it would have been difficult to point to any people, in the civilised world, more deeply imbued with reverence for their own souls, than were those Sepoys for their castes.

But this was not all; for while perturbed as they were at this momentous period by irritating doubt and

fear, shoals of rustic letters, carefully detailing all particulars concerning the predictions that were in circulation, began to arrive among them from their rural homes. And these letters, while full of earnest exhortations, strikingly illustrated the danger to which they were exposed by the wicked and foul machinations of the authorities, and forcibly reminded them that if they were once defiled by the unclean cartridge, ex communication from caste and brotherhood, and banishment from home and family, would be their irredeemable lot for ever. Here, then, was the climax in the conspiracy; for the greased cartridge was actually in their hands, and the solemn warning from their homes already too late.

Thus this incident, so sudden and appalling, drove them with horror and terror into a sort of bewildering panic. And panic is one of the most cruel of all manias; it is, moreover, infectious, and men under its influence are to all intents and purposes madmen. For instance, in the early days of the Mutiny even Englishmen exhibited aberration of mind to such an absurd extent that hundreds, actually in Calcutta itself, and at many other stations, "performed" a general and discreditable stampede to places of refuge, when there was really no cause for alarm. So, too, through the influence of a groundless panic, commenced a mutiny the like of which the world never saw, and by which an almost incomparably magnificent Empire—the Koh-i-nūr of the world—the growth of more than a century, under the fostering care of some of England's

most noble sons, was literally crumbling into dust and ruins in less than a day.

Here a member of our picket interrupted Sunker Tewāre by asking the reason for the symptoms of the Mutiny appearing first in those cantonments nearest to Calcutta, and thus, as it were, in the face of a vast European population, a strong force of English soldiers, an overwhelming number of sailors belonging to the shipping; and also while no sign of disloyalty had appeared among the Sepoys in the military stations of the Upper Provinces. His answer to this question was to the effect that, although the initial step in the direction of a mutinous movement was taken by the Sepoys stationed adjacent to Calcutta, that initial step was accidental, insomuch that when the mutiny occurred there, every regiment in the Bengal Presidency was, more or less, already disloyal, and in consequence the initial outbreak might have happened at any cantonment. But, as already stated, there being no defined, or preconcerted organisation in the movement, all the regiments, fearing to initiate the "move," waited for each other to rise, and immediately the first successfully rose in open rebellion, the rest, "in Indian file," like imitative sheep, followed as a matter of course.

Meanwhile, alarmed at the threatening attitude now assumed by the misguided and deluded Sepoys stationed at Barrackpūr and Bahgulpūr, near Calcutta, the Government strenuously endeavoured, with reassuring proclamations and conciliatory explanations, to

quiet and soothe their aroused feelings. Just as if they were now likely to believe a word of the authorities! Nay, more; they would no more have believed even the solemn oath of the East India Court of Directors, than the population of Upper India would have believed, after the annexation of Oudh, in the honesty, and veracity, of any Englishman; from the highest, to the lowest in the land.

Consequently every effort to pacify and conciliate these mercenary, pampered pets not only failed, but encouraged them to insult the authorities; and therefore, under a vague impression, no doubt, that so severe an example would tend to crush the crisis in its infancy, two of the conspicuously disloyal regiments were summarily disbanded. But this fatal act, instead of realising the desired effect, convincingly proved as efficacious in its results as fuel does to a rising fire: that is to say, for a brief interval it smothered the lighted furnace; and under the temporarily subdued flame, things seemingly relapsed once again into their former peacefulness. Still, a feeling of bewilderment was abroad, and confidence had been too violently shaken to return as suddenly as the quiet days that seemed now to prevail; besides, it was felt that this delusive calm, was the ominous premonitory sign of the coming hurricane; and so in reality it proved, by overwhelming Upper India without apparent manifestations in its approach.

The mutinous Sepoys of the disbanded regiments above alluded to, loosened from all restraint, and

goaded with vindictive animosity, spread themselves over the length and breadth of the country, and on the way to their homes diligently proclaimed the immediate advent of evil times. Moreover, they took care, not only to exaggerate the state of things at the military stations from whence they had come, but to substantiate, as it were, the wild and seditious stories which were already implicitly believed by a vast community of the people.

All this while no Englishman in the Bengal Presidency would have believed that he, and his fellow-countrymen, were standing on a volcano about to engulf them within its flames. On the contrary, before the crack of doom was heard in Upper India, confidence and trust in the natives was felt to such an extent that all Europeans—men, women, and even children—travelled over the country without the slightest hesitation or fear; and wherever they went the people always greeted them most kindly, and with the greatest respect. Nor did the Government itself realise so grave a crisis as the near approach of a sanguinary and disastrous revolution; though it apparently seemed to hope that, in the extinction of the two mutinous regiments, the clouds which overshadowed and darkened the Empire would soon pass away. And, doubtless, it was under the bane of this fatal infatuation, that a whole catalogue of melancholy blunders occurred at the commencement of the Mutiny.

Unfortunately that great, good man, Lord Canning,

had but only just arrived in India, and succeeded to a legacy in the form of a rebellion, bequeathed to him by his predecessor in office, such as, in the history of mankind, no mortal man ever had to contend with. With his inexperience, therefore, he was in no way answerable for the amazing blunders that were committed in the early days of the Mutiny. But "Officialdom" was responsible for those blunders, because "Officialdom" had passed the principal part of its life among the men with whom it had to deal, and with whom it ought to have known how to deal—more especially with those Sepoys who happened to be in garrison stations with European troops. Their teeth should have been drawn, without any discrimination, on the very first symptom of disloyalty, in the very first regiment of the native army. Disbandment, as has been seen, did more harm than good. Disarming, although it would not have stopped the Mutiny, would doubtless have had the effect of postponing it, and so enabled the Government to gain time, and prepare for the coming storm.

But, what with vacillation, hesitation, red-tapeism, and the infatuated cry of the commanding officers against disarming their "loyal men," the contagious rumour of successful rebellion flew over Upper India with the rapidity of electricity, until the culminating point in the Mutiny having at length been reached, the consequences may easily be conceived. From that moment the darkened clouds of the impending storm began to close in and gather to a head, till they burst

with all the fury of an irresistible tempest, and deluged the land with torrents of blood.

The above summary of facts is founded on Sunker Tewāre's statement, recorded in my journal on the day he made it; and, by what he has stated, it is transparently clear that, although the greased cartridge was so powerful a factor that it destroyed the loyalty of the Sepoys, the annexation of Oudh was, without a shadow of doubt, primarily, and solely, the cause that originated the Mutiny, and led to a tragical catastrophe without a parallel in the history of the world.

Turning to Sunker Tewāre, I asked him whether his statement would be corroborated by the mutineers themselves, and whether he was sure that the Mutiny resulted really from panic.

"I'll stake my life upon it, it did. I have been a Sepoy long enough to know the thoughts and feelings of my brethren; besides," he added, with a broken voice once more, as if the recollection of the recent events was too much for him, "the minds of the Sepoys had been wrought to such a pitch of furious excitement by treason giving vitality and expansion to the terrible belief of their bodies, and their souls, being on the very brink of defilement, and eternal destruction, that, maddened under contagious delirium of panic, they instantaneously plunged into a conspiracy of extermination; and, in the frenzy of despair, their very nature changed, and they became, what they never were before, cruel and inhuman in their determination to destroy those, whom they were convinced were about to destroy them."

CHAPTER XVI.

If the reader should be displeased with the above digression, and censure me for having, at this distance of time, raked up a wretched and cruel past, the best excuse I can offer is that the defunct East India Company has never been (to my knowledge) adequately exposed to public scorn for their iniquitous policy of territorial spoliation in the East. And when we come to reflect that the calamitous consequences which resulted from the Mutiny, were due to their tyrannical and rapacious acts, no words can possibly be too strong for their condemnation.

As an old Anglo-Indian I say, and I challenge contradiction, that, after the annexation of Oudh, the educated natives of Upper India despised and detested the very name of the so-called "Honourable" East India Company.

And why? Well, as the dethronement of the King of Oudh, and the seizure of his vast and superb possessions, was the last stroke of "annexation business" done by the Company before their extinction, and burial beneath the ruins of a policy they themselves had created for their doom, I will here venture to show (though it may sound egotistical; but why

"egotistical," when—as all along—in my narrative I am only concerned to tell the truth?) why the natives despised the Company, and British rule became naturally odious and justly offensive, especially to the Mahomedans; on what grounds Oudh was annexed, and how the annexation was accomplished. And as I was on the spot, and had but too good an opportunity of being an eye-witness of all that occurred on the occasion, I confine myself—as invariably—to indisputable facts.

In the outset, it is necessary to repeat that Oudh was so magnificent a kingdom that any other in Europe would have been justly proud to have amalgamated it with its own. Consequently, the Company never ceased to envy and hunger for its possession; until at last, impatient at finding no justifiable excuse for pouncing down upon the prey (I use the word in no disparaging sense), they composed—needless to say, behind a screen, to shade it from the light of the outer world—a proclamation for its seizure. And the essential abstract of this precious document is as follows: "Uniform extravagance and unparalleled profligacy, the grossest abuse of kingly power, and the most heartless disregard to justice (!) and that paternal care of his subjects which in every country forms the bond of union between the king and people." As this much is the gist of the proclamation under which Oudh was annexed, and which, no doubt, was also intended to operate as charity is said to do in mortals, and cover a multitude of the king's sins, I need not

quote further to warrant my asking: what would have been thought, said, or done had any attempt been made to confiscate, or rather usurp, a *kingdom* in Europe on so scandalously concocted a pretence, as the above-quoted abstract of the proclamation suggests?

Doubtless the king had his failings, as all men have. And admitting that Oudh was a broken-down kingdom, ruined by native misrule, did these reasons sufficiently justify the Company in summarily depriving him of his crown?

But in those benighted days—and I am speaking of far more than thirty years ago, mind—India was exclusively locked out from the civilised world, and regarded as a huge "preserve" for the families and friends—whose name was legion—of the East India Company. It was a land in which you might have passed your whole life, and been in blissful ignorance almost all the while of the outer world. There was no such thing there as Public Opinion to checkmate wrongs; no railway or telegraph communication; no means of locomotion, excepting by the barbarous *pālke*, which resembled a huge coffin slung on black poles and borne on men's shoulders, who, poor wretches, toiled and crept over the country with their living freight like beasts of burden—when, in fact, it took more than a month to accomplish a distance that now takes less than a day, and when a journey to Upper India from Calcutta or Bombay, required as much preparation and time as it does now to undertake a trip round the world;—no Independent Press to boast of. No

wonder then, that the Governor-General of India in those days held the position—to speak plainly—of a despotic Emperor. He could say and unsay, or do and undo what he pleased, and when, and how, and where he pleased. And if any proof should be deemed necessary to confirm the accuracy of these remarks, all we have to do is to call up the recollection of Lord Dalhousie's great absorption—within five years—of territory, which in area was more than double the extent of Great Britain and Ireland.

Unpleasant though it is for me to go back to the recollection of those wholesale annexations, and to speak of them in plain language, they must be so spoken of; for there is nothing like plain language, asserted and pronounced in sweeping terms, when plain language is thus needed, and if ever it was needed it is in speaking of the scandalous annexation under notice. And I am speaking, I repeat, as an eye-witness of all that occurred on the occasion, and asking whether any civilised government ever perpetrated a more unwarrantable act of tyranny and injustice, than that hidden from the world in the criminal seizure of Oudh; and whether its proud, susceptible, and deeply aggrieved people, numbering at least ten millions, could patiently bear, and contemplate with indifference, such grossly wrongful deeds, and yet in the bitterness of their feelings refrain from the relentless and barbarous vengeance which, in retaliation, they subsequently inflicted when the opportunity came.

We now come to that fatal day of the annexation,

when, only about one year before the Mutiny, a scandalised army, armed with the disgraceful proclamation quoted above, crossed the Ganges into Oudh, to the exhilarating tune of bands playing "See the conquering hero comes!" Flags and banners fluttered in the breeze; generals looked exultant, ensigns big; the people groaned, the troops applauded; the guns saluted; and the trick was done. The coveted crown was torn off the regal owner's head, and placed on that of the usurping "John Company"—the kingdom proclaimed part and parcel of his territories, without a shot being fired, or the loss of a single life; while the unfortunate king, overwhelmed with grief and tears, was trotted down to Calcutta, and lingered there in sorrowful exile, to all intents and purposes as a "State Prisoner." Think of that, reader, as a State Prisoner, poor fellow, until (in banishment for thirty years) he died.

Hence, without an atom of doubt, the Mutiny. And hence, alas! the sacrifice of innumerable innocent lives, whose precious blood will continue to stain the East India Company's historic records for all time.

It must not, however, be imagined that the king was powerless against this iniquitous usurpation of his kingdom. Far from that; for an estimation of the power at his disposal may be formed when it is explained that, although his trained army was comparatively small, it was backed literally by hundreds of thousands of armed high-caste auxiliaries, from among whom the Company's Sepoys themselves were largely

recruited; and who, in fact, mainly composed the Bengal Army. Moreover, he had the sinews of war—as it is the sinews of most things—money.

Besides, further proof of the armed force at the king's back can be adduced by mentioning the power and influence of Mān Singh, one among many of the proud and powerful Hindū noblemen of Oudh, and a more dangerous man to the welfare of our interests in that province could not have been found in those days.

Now, notwithstanding the king being a Mahomedan—and Mahomedans and Hindūs are very seldom amicably disposed to one another—on a mandate from him, Mān Singh with tens of thousands of his armed Rājpūt tribe—born warriors, and although entirely abstaining from animal food, physically a splendid race of men, with handsome countenances, averaging about six feet high, amazingly strong, and withal remarkably athletic—would have risen as one man, and, with the aid of the king's trained troops, swept the invaders through rivers of blood out of the kingdom.

Another formidable chieftain, named Bâne Madho (and I speak of both these men from personal experience), may be mentioned as possessing such influence over the Rājpūt population, as would have enabled him to double Mān Singh's force, for the expulsion of the invaders.

But no. The king was, as most Mahomedans are, a bigoted fatalist; and as such it seemed as if he preferred losing a kingdom, with all the glory of his dynasty, and departing into exile and humiliation,

rather than ignore the inexorable law of Fate, and disown his tenets.

Be that, however, as it may, and hard as the struggle must have been to him, he resigned himself to his "fate," and with meek dignity submitted to his bitter destiny. And the history of this dishonourable dethronement has not only passed into the traditional history of Hindūstān, but also into that of the Mahomedan nations of Asia—where, we may rest assured, it will never be forgotten to be handed down hereafter, from generation to generation.

If I could peer into the dim and distant future, and venture to prophesy, I would venture to foretell that, in after ages, when glorious India, in her regeneration, and under happier auspices, has grown up to maturity, and risen to the zenith of her destiny in becoming one of the grandest empires on earth, her posterity, instructed by Hindū tradition, will learn that the annexation policy of the East India Company originated the Mutiny, and that that policy was also instrumental in leading the Usurpers of Kingdoms into the realms of oblivion for ever.

Not a man in England would be better satisfied than I should to see the statements contained in this chapter refuted. But, alas! twenty-eight years' experience, together with having viewed the scene, and taken an active part on the stage myself, enable me to affirm that the plain facts stated are beyond refutation.

Sad as the contents of the above paragraphs are, I yet grieve to leave embalmed within this one—enfolded

as if in a winding sheet—a black shadow symbolising, so to speak, a ghastly spectre, eternally hovering over the unhallowed tomb of the East India Company. And although inexpressibly lamentable as it is to dwell upon the harrowing reminiscences of one of the most cruel catastrophes on record, I make no apology for the digression, especially as it has enabled me to trace, however faintly, the darkest spot on the historic pages of British rule in India. Indeed, the digression might still be continued, but what is the good; except to add that the Mutiny, in one respect, was not altogether an unmitigated calamity? For it resulted in the old order of things being rolled up like a scroll of stupendous failures; and from that eventful period a new era—the glorious Victorian era of righteousness—dawned upon benighted India, by kind Britannia generously lifting her up to a higher level of prosperity and happiness than that to which she had ever attained; and, as years roll on, she is destined to become, as I have already ventured to say, without any prophetic romance, a glory to Asia in her resources of civilisation; and in the far, far distant future, her lustre will tend to brighten the lot of countless millions of her people, and reflect the grandeur of the mighty English nation which, with its irresistible arm, benevolently dispelled the darkness in which she had slumbered for ages immemorial, and raised her to the dignity of an Empire perhaps second to none in the world. And when communication by railway is established between England and India; and steam has annihilated the space

across the Eastern and Western hemispheres ; and the natives, in their regeneration, pass a portion of their lives amid the enlightening influences of European nations ; and caste-superstitions have become humbugs of the past ; and the representatives, or M.P.'s, of the Empire take their seats in the national assemblies,—generations yet unborn may see Imperial India, linked arm-in-arm to her foster parent—Old England—taking her place among the foremost realms of the earth, as one of the most marvellous Empires that the world has ever known.

CHAPTER XVII.

We now return again to the rebels.

Their position being menaced by "flying" columns scouring Oudh right and left, they deemed it advisable to "move on," rather than remain stationary, and thus run the risk of being intercepted by some of these columns. So leisurely, however, were their movements conducted that it would have been no difficult matter to have brought them within arm's length of the Brigade immediately after they had "broken cover," had not the Rāpte, flowing between them and us, proved an effectual barrier. This river, in fact, so completely kept them out of harm's way, and arrested the object of the pursuit, that for days they must have laughed at our happy-go-lucky, and devil-may-care rambles over the burning plains, and in the blazing hot winds.

There can be little doubt that never in any war, since the world began, was the sun a greater enemy than in the Mutiny campaign. And some idea may be gained of the insufferable heat under his vertical beams, when I state the fact that we could not retain our feet in the burning stirrups, and the ground was heated to such a degree, as not to be borne by the naked foot. The

dismounted portion of the Brigade therefore naturally suffered more in proportion to ourselves, and as they droopingly dragged themselves along the line of march, and struggled on with the hardships of their lot, they looked sun-dried, ghastly, and like ghosts, while a large number among them presented a pitiful appearance, with blood trickling down their sun-cracked cheeks and blistered noses.

But who among us cared to growl at exposure or hardship in those days, when we knew that all over Upper India tens of thousands of England's "war-dogs" were having their day like ourselves, and undergoing a similar process of roasting?

So, while dogging like bloodhounds the track of the rebels, they suddenly doubled round to Amorah once more, and made a stand there, on the same memorable battle-field, where they had already received so many fatal blows. And on our approaching the locality, we beheld literally an army of vultures settled down on the blood-stained plains on which we had fought so often, and so fat and unwieldy had they become on the flesh of rebels, that not one among their countless numbers seemed disposed to quit the scene of their festivities, or move out of our way as we positively rode through them, amidst shocking sights which, in compassion to the feelings of my readers, I pass over in silence.

On June 9th, when morning dawned after a night almost as hot as day, the dropping of long shots and the distant reports of muskets warned us to prepare for

action; and the action throughout its main features resembled those I have already so briefly described.

In one respect, however, there was a novel exception, in our encountering the mutineers on this occasion before the sun had risen. They were accordingly punished with terrible severity. Drawn up in two divisions, and led by the usurper of the Gorukpūr district, they fought with all the energy of despair, until the naval howitzers and Enfield rifles had stretched their best men *hors de combat* on all sides. Then the Corps, *en masse*, were let loose in pursuit, and with hearts as hard as stones, and tempers rendered furious by aggravating exposure, they irresistibly swept over the retreating hordes, in the final scene of another sanguinary and crushing defeat.

The signs of the rainy season were now beginning to reveal themselves in the white, woolly-looking clouds, which in their airy flight had commenced to appear above the horizon; and these harbingers, so to say, of milder or cooler days were hailed with positive delight as, after the defeat of the enemy, we marched to Buste.

Here an agreeable surprise awaited us in the unexpected arrival of the 13th Light Infantry, under the command of the gallant Lord Mark Kerr. That many valuable lives might have been spared had this distinguished regiment joined the Brigade at the commencement of hostilities in this part of the country is self-evident, and so easily understood from the contents of the preceding chapters that it needs no comment in

this place. But in passing, it may be noticed as somewhat flattering to the B.Y.C. that, in welcoming the reinforcement, the Brigadier openly declared to the gallant new arrivals his belief that, but for the cavalry, his force would probably have been overwhelmed by the sheer numerical weight of the rebels. And the truth of this remark requires no confirmation, because the insurgents well knew that in action they were always within arm's length, so to say, of mounted men with drawn swords, who never did things by halves, and from whom they could not easily escape in flight. At the same time, too, they dreaded nothing more than the thundering clatter of our horses' hoofs at their heels, and our hard-hearted warwhoop of "devil-take-the-hindmost" resounding in their ears.

The reader will remember that when we passed through Buste, half-dead from the effects of hardships, and privations sustained in the early part of the year, its inhabitants, instead of showing some sympathy in behalf of our deplorable condition, received us with scowls and growls; but the tide having now turned in our favour, a reciprocal change also came over the spirit of their insolence, and they at once became like brothers in their kindness to us all; so that Orientals, too, (though less civilised than Europeans in general) evidently understand the art of exemplifying the insincerity of this hypocritical world. When we were struggling with adversity, they stroked their black moustaches and scoffed at us; now in "prosperity"—if I may use the word to express our im-

proved prospects—their professed friendship seemed apparently to have no bounds!

With regard to Buste itself, its suburbs had been transformed into a huge military cantonment, as by the wave of a magician's wand; and on our occupying the sheds and huts which had been constructed for the Brigade, we were indeed thankful for having at last got into even such rough quarters, as a harbour of refuge, after our merciless experiences and ruthless toil. But these pleasant reflections were soon dispelled by the indefatigable rebels having again reappeared in the neighbourhood of Cuptāngung. Undoubtedly, their only object in displaying all this activity, was merely to harass the Brigade while the hot weather lasted, for they were well aware that the sun was as much our mortal enemy, as he was their powerful ally. But for all that, so soon as the shadows of evening fell upon the land, we were once more on the wing, with the prospect of attacking the "Devils" on the morrow.

As we crept along at a snail's pace in a sultry night, it was too dark to notice anything; but there was an ominous stillness in the air like that foreboding the approach of a tropical storm.

The hot winds had lulled themselves to rest with the sun, the country still panted with glowing heat, and the sky, though cloudless, was dimmed by a brassy film that obscured the stars. Suddenly from the far-off distance a dull rumbling sound resembling thunder was heard, followed by vivid flashes of lightning on the horizon. Presently we were unexpectedly

kissed with cool puffs of wind, which instantly turned into strong gusts, and developed a howling hurricane. Soon flashes of lightning followed each other with amazing rapidity, and peals of thunder absolutely deafening, rolled onwards, louder, louder still as they approached, and yet louder than the roar of all our artillery fired off simultaneously. Then there seemed a momentary lull in the furious rush of the hurricane —as if to allow the forlorn creatures below to prepare for what was coming—while from the electrical discharge above descended a terrific crash, accompanied with oceans of rain seldom seen out of India, and which drenched us in a moment.

This perfect deluge assailed the Brigade about midnight, and brought it to a standstill; and although it poured down upon us in pitiless torrents until broad daylight, and every man was saturated to the skin and wet through and through, without a dry rag on his back for several mortal hours, we thoroughly enjoyed the refreshing "ducking," as a downright treat and relief to the fearful fiery torture we had helplessly endured so long.

Notwithstanding, however, this prolonged halt under a waterspout in the dark, and the road having become a river of mud, the whole Brigade reached Cuptāngung before noon, and encamped under some of those well-known pepul trees which grow to such colossal size in India, and are "reverenced" by all Hindūs, owing—as tradition tells them—to Old Buddha having invariably meditated and taught his profoundly beautiful

precepts under the benevolent foliage of the pepul tree! Apart, however, from this hobgoblin of Buddhistic tradition, the pepul tree is a grand product of the vegetable kingdom, and its dense foliage will not only defy the rays of the sun, but its gigantic leafy canopy will effectually shade a whole regiment of a thousand men.

While on this expedition we realised, with raptures of delight, that the welcome rainy season had been ushered in by the recent thunderstorm, and which, in fact, was the herald of the periodical monsoon. And with its advent what a sudden transition from misery to joy; what a charming transformation in the aspect of the country, and the temperature of the atmosphere reciprocally occurred, to be sure! Only a few days before the whole face of the earth, as far as the eye could wander, was burnt up like a cinder; but now, within a week since the bountiful rain, all Nature, satiated with the refreshing deluge and washed clean, suddenly revived, and sprang, as it were, into new life, and came out in a new toilet. Over the refreshed landscape now stretched a rolling carpet of verdant grass; innumerable birds joyfully singing appeared upon the scene, as mysteriously as the thousands of frogs that found their way out from the bowels of the earth, and croaked in loud, unearthly chorus the return of cooler days; myriads of flying and crawling insects swarmed everywhere; while we ourselves felt as if, at a single bound, we had unconsciously sprung from a perfect hell into an agreeable clime.

In other respects, too, luck seemed to be turning in our favour; for Bazār rumours—which in India are borne from mouth to mouth with almost inconceivable rapidity, and, though gathering impetus as they fly, generally are substantially correct—floated in the air, and predicted the approach of calmer times.

So that what with our being overshadowed by cool foliage, the delightful change in the temperature, and the remorseless burning winds subsiding, we could well afford to patiently wait for the absorption of the surface water round about the position taken up by the rebels, before striking them the fatal blow that shattered the last remaining hope—whatever that might have been—in the hopelessness of their "cause,"—a blow that struck them down to the ground, and from which they only rose again as armed fugitives in full cry, with their tails between their legs, like a pack of whelping curs flying before the wrath of superior dogs.

Moreover that stronghold at Belwa, having been evacuated by the enemy, was in the ravenous claws and paws of vultures and jackals. Hostile guns were now seldom heard; and incendiary fires for the best of reasons had long since ceased, there being nothing more left to burn. The villages lay in ruins and ashes; desolation and the gloom of death reigned supreme everywhere; and, wherever we went, the whole country looked as if a wave of fire—quenched with torrents of blood—had passed over it, and left nothing but human and animal skeletons strewn over its ghastly and disfigured face.

But from such desolate and hideous scenes, we passed into the darkness of yet another eventful night, and, under the guidance of some intelligent peasants, made a very hazardous detour, and got fairly in rear of the rebel position. Meanwhile our artillery and infantry, having waited for daylight, now advanced upon the enemy's front with such impetuosity that a general engagement at once ensued, and, amid the din of cannon and the roll of musketry, kindled a fire among our fellows that burst out in an appalling blaze along the whole line of the Brigade, without, however, silencing the rebel guns, which were sweeping with shot and shell the approaches to their camp. But, unchecked by this storm of iron, the attacking force bravely rushed on to carry the position. Thus far the conflict had progressed, when suddenly a body of mounted men dashing on to the plain occupied by us, beheld in their front, face to face, a bristling array of sabres flashing in the morning sun; and aware as they were of the irresistible line of bayonets approaching from the opposite direction, they turned round like men on wheels, and raced back helter-skelter to their camp, and spread an alarm there, probably to the effect that they were hemmed in on all sides. At all events, whatever alarm they raised, it resulted in a bloody and disastrous rout, followed by the loss of all their field equipage. From the effects of that loss they never recovered; and from that moment the peace of these districts was secured.

Thus the object of the expedition having been ac-

complished, we leisurely retraced our steps to Buste, where, without another hostile operation, terminated the first year's service of the Bengal Yeomanry Cavalry.

And on that memorable anniversary, which called up a thousand recollections, the Corps assembled to hear the contents of a letter from the Government, addressed to the General commanding the Brigade. The mails from England, too, had been received in camp on the same day as the letter under reference, and there were, among those for us all, many letters from home for those whom we had buried in several forlorn and blood-stained fields, and where the rain and winds of the inclement monsoon, were now weeping and sighing over the lonely and premature graves, that were destined to be ruthlessly ploughed up year after year, during the agricultural seasons of tillage.

The following paragraphs are the only extracts from the Government letter, above mentioned, that need be inserted here.

"During the last twelve months the Bengal Yeomanry Cavalry have eminently distinguished themselves, and the Government has repeatedly acknowledged their gallantry in the field, and their exemplary conduct on all occasions.

"As there may be some of their number to whom it may be very inconvenient to continue with the Corps for any further period, the Governor-General is willing to allow them to take their discharge at once."

The retirement of those members of the Corps whose interests and prospects were at stake by their

absence from their avocations having been sanctioned, forty-six volunteers—retaining many souvenirs of the campaign, in the shape of bullet-wounds and sword-scars ; or shattered in health or constitution—amid the waving of helmets in the air on the points of bayonets and sabres, cries of "Bravo," and cheers from the whole Brigade, sheathed their sabres, and bade farewell to the Corps for ever.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE tale of the services of the Bengal Yeomanry Cavalry is told—and told unassumingly, in a mere nutshell, with the humdrum accuracy of history. And this tale adds another footnote to the annals of the Indian Mutiny. But, in conclusion, I have yet to add that during the rainy season the Corps remained at Buste in profound peace. A market was opened in the town; the shops, as in former days, were filled with goods; and the Commissariat having undergone resuscitation, improved its stores; sickness became less; the feeble began to get stronger, and by the time the monsoon had well-nigh run itself out, men looked in better health once more. After the rainy season, the Corps was employed in some minor affairs with fugitive rebels on the Oudh frontier; thence it marched to Sultānpūr, and was there "broken up"—not, however, without a splendid Notification in recognition of its services, gazetted and published early in 1859; and from which I transcribe verbatim only the following paragraphs:—

"His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India in Council cannot allow the officers and men of the Bengal Yeomanry Cavalry to separate, without expressing in General Orders his acknowledgment of the excellent services they have

rendered, and his admiration of their endurance, and of their gallant bearing on the many occasions in which they have come in contact with the enemy.

"The *Gazettes* of the 23rd March, 27th April, 11th May, 6th and 13th July, 13th August, 12th and 19th October, 23rd November, 1858, and 11th and 18th January and 9th March, 1859, all testify that the Bengal Yeomanry Cavalry have borne a distinguished part in the several operations therein recounted.

"Long marches, exposure, fatigue, and harassing patrol and picket duties have from the first fallen to the lot of this young Corps, and they have borne the whole in a truly soldier-like spirit.

"The Governor-General in Council desires to convey to the brave officers and men of the Bengal Yeomanry Cavalry—*a regiment of which all who have belonged to it may be proud* *—his best thanks for the good service they have rendered to the State, and in disbanding the Corps, he wishes the members of it a hearty farewell."

The reader will have noticed that, in quoting the numerous *Gazettes* recounting the fourteen actions in which we were engaged during the campaign, I have mentioned only about half that number in the preceding chapters; and my reason for curtailing them, I ought to say, is simply because they so closely resembled one another in general feature that, had I described them all, it would have been almost tantamount to describing the same actions, as it were, over and over again.

And now, with almost the last drop of ink in my laboured pen, I have only to add that the above Noti-

* The italics are mine.

fication was penned by the generous hand of that illustrious Viceroy of India, Earl Canning of immortal memory, who, in bidding farewell to the Corps in such laudatory terms, has left no ordinary record of the men who voluntarily, at all personal risks, and at all personal sacrifices, rallied round him in the tremendous Imperial crisis through which India had commenced to pass ; and who in those critical days of immeasurable anguish, when no Englishman in the Upper Provinces could call his life his own, stood by him in behalf of the endangered Empire—not when succour had arrived from England, and British bayonets were gleaming over the country, but in the darkest hour of trial, when the gloom of despondency and despair hung like a pall over the Bengal Presidency, and the fiendish massacres of innumerable English families, had made Upper India like a vast Christian charnel-house.

Furthermore, the Viceroy, in thus generously recording the meritorious and splendid services rendered by this little band of devoted Volunteers, was doubtless influenced by the remembrance of the exceptional ordeals through which they had passed while aiding in the suppression of the Mutiny. For he well knew and could speak of their days of trial, of nights of anxiety, of hardships encountered, of dangers vanquished, of sufferings borne with heroic fortitude, such as none except those who had themselves experienced them could understand.

Above all—how far above, words silenced by sorrow cannot say—he was aware of the sad fact that a con-

siderable number of the Corps, in the flower of their youth or manhood, had lost their lives, while a larger number still shed their blood, in helping to crush a Mutiny that in unparalleled treachery, and tragical infamy, has indelibly tarnished, and for ever blood-stained, one of the saddest pages in the saddest annals of the whole world; and over the ever-lamentable record of which, alas! the veil of oblivion can never be drawn.

Finally, in memory of my departed comrades who died in the Bengal Yeomanry Cavalry, it remains to be said that, though their deeds of glory are not blazoned in letters of gold, the imperishable records of the memorable campaign, in which they lost their youthful lives, enshrine the sacred death-roll commemorative of their devoted services, and tend to immortalise the patriotic devotion by which that famous Corps was animated, while passing through an ordeal as terrible as any that ever tested the daring audacity, and unyielding endurance of what may be called, a handful of dauntless and uncompromising VOLUNTEERS.

THE END.